Between conviction and critique : A hermeneutical exploration of the nexus between academic and ecclesial praxis within the Australian Pentecostal community

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Between Conviction and Critique:

A Hermeneutical Exploration of the Nexus between Academic and Ecclesial
Praxis within the Australian Pentecostal Community

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Statement of Authorship and Sources

This thesis contains no material that has been extracted in whole or in part from a thesis that I have submitted towards the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.

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Acknowledgements

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
AC	Alphacrucis College
ACC	Australian Christian Churches
AOG	Assemblies of God
APS	*Australian Pentecostal Studies*
DV	*Dei Verbum:* Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation
EBC	The Expositor's Bible Commentary
HeyJ	*The Heythrop Journal*
IBC	*The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*
IBMR	*International Bulletin of Mission Research*
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IJPT	*International Journal of Practical Theology*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JPSBC	The JPS Bible Commentary
JPT	*Journal of Pentecostal Theology*
JRH	*Journal of Religious History*
NAE	The National Association of Evangelicals
NCBC	The New Cambridge Bible Commentary
NICOT	The New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIVAC	The NIV Application Commentary
OTL	Old Testament Library
PBC	Pontifical Bible Commission
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
THOTC	The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
UBOT	Understanding the Bible Old Testament
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary

Abstract

Pentecostals have conventionally been defined as a group who avoid critical reflection on the biblical text in favour of Spirit-led experience. This weighting encourages a general anti-intellectual disposition often taken as representative or defining of the movement. While this description may well be a matter of stereotyping, it is a view that holds considerable force.

This thesis explores the nexus between the practice of a Pentecostal academy and Pentecostal ecclesial praxis within the Australian context and their role in influencing or maintaining this view. An initial intuition of incompatibility between Pentecostal academia and Pentecostal ecclesial praxis inspired the design and distribution of a survey in an attempt to understand and explain the perceived incongruence. An analysis of the survey results highlights what I take to be the underlying issue, namely, a matter of hermeneutics. Accordingly, the thesis examined the discipline of hermeneutics and the philosophical issues that exert influence on the Pentecostal interpretation of the biblical text. This examination emphasised the importance of pre-conceptions, one's contextual situatedness, along with the possibilities and desirability of multi-vocality in interpretation with respect to Australian Pentecostalism. Having canvased the development of Australian Pentecostalism with an eye to the pre-conceptions embedded in biblical interpretation, the tension between Pentecostal academics and ecclesial practice is shown to be a constant theme throughout the movement's history and something which contributes significantly to an anti-intellectual disposition. However, what has not, I suggest, been explored in sufficient detail elsewhere is the character of academic engagement with the biblical text that has occurred since the inception of Pentecostalism. Accordingly, the thesis considers the

development of Pentecostal hermeneutics and establishes that while certain evangelical approaches to and perspectives on critical biblical scholarship may have helped Pentecostals establish academic credibility and acceptance, that same partnership downplayed the significance of spiritual experience in the overall hermeneutical process. This exploration emphasised the need for ongoing exploration of a distinct and distinctive Pentecostal hermeneutic. To contribute to this discussion, I explored the Catholic tradition's approach to hermeneutical issues relating to the interpretation of the Bible to offer a counterpoint for Pentecostal reflection. Having explored the documents that led to the Second Vatican Council and those that emerged subsequently, the thesis does not propose a "framework" within which Pentecostal interpretation can be controlled. On the contrary, it looks to stimulate discussion on frameworks that might shed light on how specific and often unidentified hermeneutical issues can be identified and discussed.

The principle analytical issue is one of hermeneutics, and the search for a hermeneutical framework that is appropriate to and defining of the Pentecostal community in Australia. The thesis, then, is not an attempt to resolve or dissolve a problem. It is instead a contribution to a rigorous definition of a problem and an invitation to a process of discernment in which the question is what remains to the fore and guides investigation and reflection.

Chapter One: Introduction

"… we do not set out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived in order to arrive at men in the flesh. We set out from real active men …."[1]

Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, 47

The distinction drawn by Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology* highlights two possibilities, two perspectives and two firm traditions, within social analysis: idealist and materialist. While both point to and are based upon radically divergent epistemologies, their preservation and perpetuation highlight an antinomy that has "rendered social science asunder".[2]

Rather than choose between subjectivist and objectivist modes of knowledge, between an analysis of the symbolic or the material, or a separation of theory from practice, this study seeks to transcend such dichotomies within the context of an integrated, epistemologically coherent mode of analysis that "explicitly encompasses the activities of the analyst who proffers theoretical accounts of the practices of others".[3]

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[1] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology*, ed. C. J. Arthur (New York: International Publishers, 1972), 47.

[2] Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, trans. Loïc Wacquant (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), 3.

[3] Ibid., 4. See also Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*, trans. Peter Collier (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008).

This is then a study of the Pentecostal tradition, undertaken by someone who identifies as a Pentecostal by affiliation and teaches Biblical Studies within the Pentecostal academy, Alphacrucis College (AC). It is a study based upon an observation of the tradition by someone firmly located within it. That observation is of a tension between the worlds of the Pentecostal academy and, that of Pentecostal practice.

While this is not a novel observation, it is perhaps most evident when considering preaching, a subject on which much is written inside and outside the movement and which highlights a lack of depth and content.[4] John Enyinnaya, for example, notes that a sermon before public delivery focuses on the well-informed meaning of a particular text using a critical reading approach.[5] However, many would argue that this is seldom the case for Pentecostal preaching. In the Australian context, Adam White[6] observes that a "Sunday message in a Pentecostal church is less of an exercise in rigorous biblical exposition and much more of an oratory display aimed at motivating the church members to whatever course of action is being encouraged."[7]

I have made similar observations as those described by White above, and it was these observations, one in particular, that furnished the impetus to undertake this study. On this occasion, a student who was an ordained minister with the ACC and had also completed the

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[4] Joseph Byrd, "Pentecostal Homiletics: A Convergence of History, Theology, and Worship," in *Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Preaching*, ed. Lee Roy Martin (Cleveland, Tennessee: CPT Press, 2015), 287.

[5] John O. Enyinnaya, "Pentecostal Hermeneutics and Preaching," *Ogbomoso Journal of Preaching* 13, no. 1 (2008): 145.

[6] White is the Head of Biblical Studies and a New Testament lecturer at Alphacrucis College as well as a Pentecostal preacher.

[7] Adam G. White, "Not in Lofty Speech or Media: A Reflection on Pentecostal Preaching in Light of 1 Cor 2:1-5.," 24 (2015): 119.

Bachelor of Theology at AC preached in a chapel service.[8] While I firmly anticipated the content of sermons preached by alumni to evidence sound exegesis with balanced, faithful delivery, I was surprised to observe what White describes as "'hip-hop lollypop preaching'",[9] a pre-critical, near superficial reading of the biblical text, accompanied by loosely related anecdotes which provided entertainment value at best. My observation of this style and character of preaching gave me cause to ask why, given their exposure to the rigour offered via the academy, alumni of Alphacrucis preach in this way.

While I understand that critical reading approaches more commonly reside within academic discourse, their ultimate focus is on discovering the well-informed meaning of a particular text.[10] This suggests that a critical reading approach *should* also be operative within the realm of preaching. Therefore, as a critical reading approach should be evident in preaching, an assessment of preaching is a valid way to gauge the degree to which critical skills are drawn upon in that practice.

The use of an anecdote serves to communicate the initial observation that inspired this study. However, it also reflects and follows what is a standard and respected practice within Pentecostal churches; the vitality of telling a story or sharing a "testimony".[11] Although the strength of the Pentecostal tradition lies in its compelling narratives, its weakness is evident

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[8] The sermon lasted approximately 25 minutes and was taken from the book of Ezekiel.

[9] White, "Not in Lofty Speech or Media," 118.

[10] Enyinnaya, "Pentecostal Hermeneutics and Preaching," 145.

[11] Simon Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2003), 23. Question 26 in the survey questionnaire speaks to this. The question asked is "On a scale from 1 (Not Important) to 10 (Very important), please rate how important the following are to you when preaching or teaching from the Old Testament? *(Select one option on EACH line)*". The third line of the question relates to "The sharing of a testimony".

in its failure to explain itself.[12] Simon Chan observes, "Pentecostals have been better at telling their story than explaining it."[13] According to Chan, when Pentecostals retell an encounter with God in a simple way, what they often fear is the loss of dynamism, particularly once the reality of it is reflected upon and conceptualised.[14] John Mackay comments that while dynamism is essential, dynamism without reflection is simply fanaticism, and reflection without dynamism is paralysis of action.[15]

1.1 Aims and Purposes

This thesis aims to explore the nexus between the practice of a Pentecostal academy and Pentecostal ecclesial praxis within the Australian context. The purpose of this exploration is to determine whether and in what ways the critical skills developed by students within biblical studies are utilised and applied within practical ministry settings. Ultimately, the thesis will consider the benefit[16] of formal biblical studies and its impact on hermeneutical processes. Aside from the general discussion, this will be achieved by describing, analysing, and evaluating the reading practice of students within a Pentecostal academy who have engaged in formal biblical studies. The study intends to

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[12] Ibid., 20.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid., 24.

[15] John Mackay cited by John R. W. Stott, *Your Mind Matters: The Place of the Mind in the Christian Life* (Leicester: IVP, 1972), 7.

John Stott argues that God's purpose is that both be used "zeal directed by knowledge, knowledge fired by zeal."

Ibid.

[16] There, of course is a possibility that influence does not exist and the nature as well as the extent of the influence may be unknown. Johannes A. van der Ven, *Human Rights or Religious Rules?* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2010), 54.

make a simple contribution to the academic and ecclesial contexts by developing an informed understanding of Pentecostal hermeneutics and identity.

This thesis will proceed from an initially descriptive to a more analytical focus by analysing the attitudes of current and former students of Alphacrucis College[17] towards critical skills acquired within biblical studies and through their engagement with selected Old Testament[18] literature. It is anticipated that this study may identify potential causes for any perceived disconnect between two communities: the Pentecostal academy and the Pentecostal ecclesial setting.

In advancing the thesis question and evaluating the hermeneutical processes that contribute to an appropriation of the biblical text, it is hoped that this study may offer some valuable insights into the *gestalt* of Pentecostal identity and culture. An engagement with this self-understanding or self-identity, however accurate, is crucial in terms of understanding the developing trajectory of the Australian Pentecostal community and an essential element through which dialogue with the wider Christian and non-Christian community can be initiated and sustained.

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[17] The survey is designed to hear from students of Alphacrucis College who are currently enrolled in (at time survey was undertaken) or have completed the following awards: BTh (Bachelor of Theology) BMin (Bachelor of Ministry) BBM (Bachelor of Business/Ministry) BCM (Bachelor of Contemporary Ministry). The BMin degree replaced the BCM degree in 2013.

[18] I acknowledge that the term 'Hebrew Bible' or 'Israel's Scriptures' are more neutral descriptors of the Christian term 'Old Testament', the use of which implies, some would suggest in a derogatory way, that these books are 'old'. I use the term 'Old Testament' as it is readily recognised by the Pentecostal community, particularly by the participants of the survey questionnaire that forms part of thesis. I feel to use the neutral terms 'Hebrew Bible' or 'Israel's Scriptures' would cause unnecessary confusion.

1.2 Area of Research

To answer the question of whether the critical skills developed by students within biblical studies are utilised and applied within practical ministry settings, the main body of research is framed by analysing two communities of practice within Australian Pentecostalism. The first community is referred to here as the Pentecostal academy, specifically, the national college of the Australian Christian Churches (ACC), namely AC. The second community is Pentecostal ministry practitioners within the context of Pentecostal ecclesial practice.[19]

While both communities profess a shared history and faith, the basis of any separation becomes apparent when one probes the understanding of the biblical text (its nature, function, and role) that is operative within and defining of either. An appropriate place to begin the discussion is to consider the characteristic view of the academy that exists within the Pentecostal tradition. This view is perhaps best captured in a dedication made by Walter Hollenweger nearly half a century ago. In a significant study regarding Pentecostals, which Hollenweger simply called "The Pentecostals", he begins with the following words, "To my friends and teachers in the Pentecostal Movement who taught me to love the Bible and to my teachers and friends in the Presbyterian Church who taught me to understand it."[20]

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[19] One must acknowledge the challenge of the former instructing the latter, i.e., courses on Ministry and Preaching in an academy. It is unclear whether the separation is real, this follows what some consider Max Weber's heuristic device that enables analysis and as such "Ideal Types". Richard Swedberg asserts, "it is clear that the ideal type can help the social scientist to successfully approach a new topic." Richard Swedberg, "How to Use Max Weber's Ideal Type in Sociological Analysis," *Journal of Classical Sociology* 18, no. 3 (2018): 184.

[20] Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals: The Charismatic Movement in the Churches* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1972), xvii.

Although Hollenweger's remarks are somewhat hackneyed due to their preponderance within various contemporary writings relating to Pentecostal hermeneutics[21], they are still rather telling. Kenneth Archer describes the words as a "chiding remark [which] undoubtedly reflects the simplistic and 'uncritical' work among early Pentecostals."[22] Although it is unclear whether Hollenweger's intention at the time of penning his dedication was to disparage the Pentecostal academic tradition,[23] according to Archer, the words do suggest "that the Reformed tradition has provided [Hollenweger]… with a better intellectual approach to understanding the Scriptures than has the Pentecostal tradition."[24] Whether a non-critical understanding of the biblical text is unique to early Pentecostals, most would agree that in broad terms, the words do ring true in a period where there were few formally educated Pentecostal readers of the biblical text.[25] Australian church historian Barry Chant notes that during the 1920s in Australia,

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[21] In this thesis the term 'Pentecostal Hermeneutics' does not suggest that there is a single hermeneutical approach which is common to all Pentecostals or that the hermeneutical approach taken by Pentecostal is indeed unique to them. As noted by William Atkinson, the term rather, suggests that there are "tendencies which are common among Pentecostals. This is often due to a common experience of the Spirit, and to relatively uniform doctrines of the Spirit and the Bible." William Atkinson, "Worth a Second Look?: Pentecostal Hermeneutics," *Evangel* 21, no. 2 (2003): 49.

[22] Kenneth J. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century: Spirit Scripture and Community* (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 133.

[23] Andrew Davies, "What Does It Mean to Read the Bible as a Pentecostal?" *JPT* 18, no. 2 (2009): 217. This said, Hollenweger does make additions to this dedication in subsequent publications, he adds, "To my friends and scholars in the Pentecostal Movement who taught me to criticize and understand Pentecostalism's weaknesses and blind spots and to the friends and scholars in the universal Church who showed me Pentecostalism's strengths and potentials. To the ex-Pentecostals who were wounded and broken by Pentecostalism and who couldn't help but respond by fighting their former friends and to new converts to Pentecostalism who found an inspiring spirituality and new life in Pentecostalism." Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), Dedication.

[24] Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century: Spirit Scripture and Community*, 133.

[25] Atkinson, "Worth a Second Look?: Pentecostal Hermeneutics," 50; Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century: Spirit Scripture and Community*, 133.

> Tertiary education was not common among the Pentecostals…Although the value of sound education was readily accepted, theological education was regarded with some suspicion… There was genuine hesitancy about the effect of formal theological study on students' faith and a conviction that the local church was God's preferred school of biblical training.[26]

Although not unique to Pentecostals, they have long treasured the biblical text, and its importance for the tradition cannot be overstated.[27] This sentiment is reflected in Hollenweger's original dedication to Pentecostals as those "who taught me to love the Bible".[28] A 'love' that in some ways followed the Reformist's cry, *Sola Scriptura,* and which fostered a defensive attitude towards biblical criticism. As the "'people of the book'",[29] Pentecostals believed that they were somehow protecting the 'holiness' of the Bible by resisting the work of critical biblical scholarship.[30] However, the task of the 'critical' study of the biblical text is not to denigrate the Bible or to focus on errors. Instead, as Brettler states, the term "biblical criticism" broadly means "the process of establishing the original, contextual meaning of biblical texts and assessing their historical accuracy…to

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[26] Barry Chant, *The Spirit of Pentecost: The Origins and Development of the Pentecostal Movement in Australia 1870-1939* (Lexington, Kentucky: Emeth Press, 2011), 14. In 1925, the Pentecostal Church of Australia launched a Bible institute which lasted only a short time, later redeveloped into the current national ministry training college of the ACC (Australian Christian Churches), Alphacrucis College.

Ibid., 15.

[27] Wonsuk Ma, "Biblical Studies in the Pentecostal Tradition: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*, ed. Murray W. Dempster, Bryon D. Klaus, and Douglas Petersen (Oxford, U.K.: Regnum Books International, 1999), 54; Yongnan Jeon Ahn, *Interpretation of Tongues and Prophesy in 1 Corinthians 12-14 with a Pentecostal Hermeneutic* (Dorset, U.K.: Deo Publishing, 2013), 1.

[28] Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, xvii.

[29] Ma, "Biblical Studies in the Pentecostal Tradition: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," 54.

[30] Ibid.

make informed judgments about its current meaning and significance."[31] Brettler further remarks that, "Such study is an indispensable step in biblical interpretation." [32]

While it would certainly seem that Pentecostals distrusted the intellectual enterprise beyond the effects of theological study, similar concerns vis-à-vis biblical criticism are also related to a waning of piety. The issue was not how one thought or reflected so much as a collapse or lack of feeling.[33] Spittler notes, "[It was not] the decline of orthodoxy but the decay of devotion that lay at the root of the problem. It was not merely that the church was liberal, but that it was lifeless. What was needed was not a new argument for heads but a new experience for hearts."[34] This belief is consistent with the heritage of the Pentecostal movement, traced by some to Puritanism and Pietism and based on teachings framed around the work of the Holy Spirit.[35]

Pentecostalism did not begin in a vacuum, and antecedents such as Methodism and Keswick spirituality are well recognised in its development and polygenetic nature.[36] Indeed, it is widely acknowledged that from its formal emergence a little over one hundred years ago,

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[31] Marc Zvi Brettler, Peter Enns, and Daniel J. Harrington, *Bible and the Believer: How to Read the Bible Critically and Religiously.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 3. Although some would argue that there is no such thing as 'current meaning' as the text means what it meant. There is only current application.

[32] Ibid.

[33] 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 O. Poewe (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 108.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2011), 35–38. Although Donald Dayton notes these as "parallels rather than direct or actual sources." Ibid., 38. The historical link with Methodism culminating in Pentecostalism is further discussed in chapter four.

[36] Also see Michael McClymond, ""I Will Pour Out of My Spirit Upon All Flesh": An Historical and Theological Meditation on Pentecostal Origins," *Pneuma* 37 (2015): 356–374.

the Pentecostal movement has generally been led by those who have been evangelistically orientated and ultimately "uneducated and uninterested in "theologizing".[37]

Many within the movement believed that the early Pentecostal revivals[38] fulfilled the dual prophecies of Joel 2:23. The "early rain" or "autumn rain" from this verse is interpreted as the miraculous events on the day of Pentecost, described in Acts 2:17-21. The subsequent "latter rain" is understood as the modern outpouring of God's Spirit that began during the early Pentecostal revivals, stressing the imminent return of Christ.[39] According to Wonsuk Ma, this "literalistic and simplistic understanding of scripture … [helped Pentecostals to] make sense of their movement."[40] The literalistic reading of the biblical text was a means of resisting the increasing use of biblical criticism,[41] contributing partly to a fundamental anti-intellectualism among early Pentecostals.[42]

For Pentecostals, the restoration of Spirit baptism to the Church was to prepare the Church for Christ's return.[43] According to L. F. Wilson, the belief in the imminent return of Christ caused a "sense of urgency… [prompting] more than one early Pentecostal to leave college

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[37] Jacqueline Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 14.

[38] I define this as a religious reawakening, in the form of increased spiritual interest or renewal in the life of a church locally, national or on a global scale.

[39] Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2005), 83.

[40] Ma, "Biblical Studies in the Pentecostal Tradition: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," 54.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Lee Roy Martin, "Introduction," in *Pentecostal Hermeneutics: A Reader*, ed. Lee Roy Martin (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 5. According to Stephen Graham "The evidence of tongues gave the final proof that the latter rain had begun and that the final harvest was underway." Stephen R. Graham, "'Thus Saith The Lord': Biblical Hermeneutics in the Early Pentecostal Movement," *Ex Auditu* 12 (1996): 127.

to begin preaching, and partially explains the great evangelistic and missionary emphasis of the movement."[44] Today, an increasing number of Pentecostals are returning to colleges and pursuing extended biblical and theological study.[45] Furthermore, the growth of Pentecostal scholarship that has slowly emerged in the last 50 years has allowed an increased opportunity for those seeking to engage academically within their own movement.[46]

In a further article, nearly 25 years after his original dedication, Hollenweger, perhaps in an effort to clarify his position, refers "to scores of first-class Pentecostal scholars." [47] He lists several scholarly men and women from the Pentecostal tradition who "deserve to be taken seriously by both Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals."[48] He concludes by stating,

> It is now possible to be filled with the Spirit, to enjoy the specific Pentecostal charismata and Pentecostal spirituality, to believe in Pentecostal mission, and at the same time to use one's critical faculties, to develop them and to use them - as any other charism-for the kingdom of God.[49]

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[44] L. F. Wilson, "Bible Institutes, Colleges, Universities.," ed. Stanley M. Burgess, *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2002), 373.

[45] Denise A. Austin, *Our College: A History of the National College of Australian Christian Churches (Assemblies of God in Australia)* (Sydney, Australia: APS, 2013), 325. See *Figure 21. Student Enrolments in Ministry or Theology Undergraduate Awards 2010-2021* and *Figure 21*
. Higher Education Student Enrolments 2010-2021 in chapter four.

[46] Speaking from the North American context, Amos Yong notes three waves of Pentecostal scholarship which have emerged since the 1960's. The first wave was the Pentecostal historians wishing to preserve the early eyewitness' accounts before they died. The second wave was the Pentecostal biblical scholars, who began to receive doctorates in the 1970's. The third wave consisted of the Pentecostal theologian, earning doctorates since the mid 1980's. Amos Yong, "Pentecostalism and the Theological Academy," *Theology Today* 64, no. 2 (July 2007): 245–248.

[47] Walter J. Hollenweger, "The Critical Tradition of Pentecostalism," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1 (1992): 7.

[48] Ibid., 9.

[49] Ibid., 17.

While the development and use of the critical faculties may be occurring within the Pentecostal academy, the position from which Hollenweger is speaking,[50] it is yet to be proven whether the same can be said of the Church context. This 'unknown' highlights the central question this thesis is attempting to explore; are the critical skills developed by students within biblical studies utilised and applied within practical ministry settings?

For over two decades, the Pentecostal academy in Australia has taught critical skills in biblical studies at the tertiary level. Although there are many Pentecostal colleges globally, only the national ministry training college of the ACC, AC, will be considered in exploring the thesis question within the Australian context. AC is the largest of a small number of Pentecostal colleges in Australia that teach biblical studies at the tertiary level. One could conclude that the small number of colleges is due to the reluctance of Pentecostals to engage in the task of critical reflection. A reluctance, which Shane Clifton[51] notes, "is particularly acute in Australia."[52] Clifton further notes that the current atmosphere within Australian Pentecostal assemblies critiques criticism itself[53] and is

> …associated with an insistence on positive thinking. This culture, derived from the fundamentalist response to the liberal takeover of institutions of higher learning and expressed in the "word of faith" and "prosperity" doctrines… presumes that negativity and criticism are antithetical to a flourishing life.[54]

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[50] Archer similarly references "new levels of sophistication" reached by Pentecostal scholarship and, much like Hollenweger, cites several Pentecostal journals and conferences globally to support his point. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century: Spirit Scripture and Community*, 134. Hollenweger describes the "impressive pages" of the various Pentecostal journals and conferences. Hollenweger, "The Critical Tradition of Pentecostalism," 7.

[51] Shane Clifton is an Australian Post-Pentecostal disability theologian.

[52] Shane Clifton, *Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analysing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia* (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2009), 5. Some would argue that a reluctance to engage critically is more acute in the Asian and 'Global South' contexts.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid.

Naturally, negative thinking can self-perpetuate. Although this is also true of a positive attitude, as Clifton notes, "the greater danger occurs when a particular culture confuses "negativity" with "criticism", and rejects critical thinking altogether."[55] Kärkkäinen also links the possible misunderstanding of the very terms *critical* and *criticism* associated with the critical method, as well as various forms of biblical criticism[56], to the reluctance by some to engage in any critical inquiry of the biblical text. For Kärkkäinen, it is the term 'critical' that suggests to the

> …popular mind…something like "tearing apart" or "breaking down" beliefs dearly held… [Instead of the] more constructive meaning of critical, which means something like "sorting out" or "weighing" between various opinions, options, viewpoints. On the way to a confident opinion or belief, the intellectual capacities are put in use to ensure that one's opinion is justified in light of current knowledge, experience, and wisdom.[57]

The Bible itself is the result of a long history of reception and criticism as the texts within the canon became standardised. While the critical activity that established the canon is largely unknown, the authority of the agreed texts has been maintained under questioning from the faithful as well as from opponents and heretics.[58]

In Pentecostal circles, it is not uncommon to hear that *critical* examination of the biblical text is no substitute for engaging with the spiritual element of the Pentecostal tradition as a part of the interpretive process. It is well established that the experience of the Holy Spirit

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[55] Ibid.

[56] Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, "'Epistemology, Ethos, and Environment': In Search of a Theology of Pentecostal Theological Education," *Pneuma* 34, no. 2 (2012): 253.

[57] Ibid.

[58] J. C. O 'Neill, "Biblical Criticism," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary: A-C*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 726.

is intricately woven into what it means to be a Pentecostal. As Rickie Moore observes, "Pentecostals bear distinctive witness to a reality and dimension of life in the Holy Spirit, out of which a uniquely Pentecostal approach to scripture emerges."[59]A point similarly made by Jacobsen, who sums up Pentecostals as,

> Spirit-conscious, Spirit-filled, and Spirit-empowered Christian believers. In contrast to other groups or churches that emphasize either doctrine or moral practice, Pentecostals stress affectivity. It is the *experience* of God that matters – the felt power of the Spirit in the world, in the church, and in one's own life. Pentecostals believe the doctrine and ethics are important, but the bedrock of Pentecostal faith is experiential. It is living faith in the living God – a God who can miraculously, palpably intervene in the world – that defines the Pentecostal orientation of faith.[60]

Although various scholars recognise this experiential orientation of the Pentecostal hermeneutic[61], there is minimal emphasis on the role of biblical study or formal theological education and how this element affects what Grey describes as the "hermeneutical puzzle"[62] in the overall reading process. Critical analysis or scholarly interpretation is not intended to be some sort of *ersatz* for the work of the Holy Spirit, nor are the two necessarily opposed or mutually antagonistic.[63] A point similarly made by Enyinnaya, who states that "the use of hermeneutical tools and the use of sound interpretative principles does not preclude the "anointing" of the Holy Spirit in the interpretation of the word of God."[64] Ergo, it is quite

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[59] Rickie D. Moore, "A Pentecostal Approach to Scripture," in *Pentecostal Hermeneutics: A Reader*, ed. Lee Roy Martin (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 11.

[60] Douglas Jacobsen, "Introduction: The History and Significance of Early Pentecostal Theology," in *A Reader in Pentecostal Theology: Voices from the First Generation*, ed. Douglas Jacobsen (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2006), 4.

[61] Peter D. Neumann, "Pentecostalism and the Experience of the Spirit," in *Pentecostal Experience: An Ecumenical Encounter* (Eugene, Or: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 100–104; Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 15; Jacobsen, "Introduction: The History and Significance of Early Pentecostal Theology," 4.

[62] Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 4.

[63] Daniel E. Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality* (Sheffield, U.K.: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 11. A point similarly made by John O. Enyinnaya. Enyinnaya, "Pentecostal Hermeneutics and Preaching," 150.

[64] Enyinnaya, "Pentecostal Hermeneutics and Preaching," 150.

feasible that the work of the Holy Spirit extends to utilising critical skills learnt in the academic domain to aid in the interpretive process of reading the biblical text. Therefore, spirituality should not necessarily be considered inherently hostile to theological education and academic pursuit.

While some are clearly and seemingly reticent about the concern and perhaps all too readily accept the status quo, a shift in thinking is needed, as critical reflection and critical *self*-reflection are vital as the movement develops. Unfortunately, as Clifton notes, "there is little space… in the movement, [for] those whose calling involves inquiry"[65]. Jeffrey Goss stresses that it must be recognised that,

> The academic culture and the culture of ecclesiastical leadership emerge from...a different calling, and differing gifts of the Holy Spirit. Whatever the tension between those in pastoral, institutional, and ecclesiastical leadership roles within the Christian community, the long heritage of Christianity tells us that these are complementary gifts for the building up of the body of Christ.[66]

1.3 Structure

Chapter one will begin with a précis of the aims and purpose of the thesis and frame the main body of research. It will describe the observations that informed and provided the rationale for undertaking the thesis and the need for a survey questionnaire to test the

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[65] Clifton, *Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analysing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia*, 5.

[66] Jeffrey Gros, "It Seems Good to the Holy Spirit and to Us: The Ecclesial Vocation of the Pentecostal Scholar," *Pneuma* 34, no. 2 (2012): 172.

original perception regarding the lack of alignment between an academic and ecclesial or faith-oriented reading of the biblical text.

Chapter two will describe the development of the survey questionnaire. The chapter will include an overview of the survey methodology, design, data collection, and limitations of the survey. It will then present the survey results and provide a general discussion before developing the findings and relating them to the subsequent chapters and the overall research focus.

Chapter three will examine the discipline of hermeneutics and explore its key theorists through the lens of the hermeneutical issues exposed in the previous chapter and in an effort to engage the philosophical issues that exert influence on the Pentecostal interpretation of the biblical text. The chapter will subsequently explore the process of understanding texts and the presuppositions that informed that understanding.

Taking its lead from the significance of presuppositions and prior understandings, chapter four will consider the question: What is Pentecostalism? Following a brief discussion regarding categories, categorical thinking, and essentialism, definitions of 'Pentecostalism' will be offered in an effort to frame the overall discussion. The chapter will consider the development of Pentecostalism as a religious phenomenon. Its key features and diverse nature will be explored before focusing on the specifics of the Australian context. Understanding the development of Pentecostalism more broadly, specifically within Australia, provides the analytical framework and context for chapter

five, which explores the emergence of Pentecostal's academic engagement with the biblical text.

Chapter five will examine the hermeneutical orientations, practices and processes that defined the *early*, *modern*, and *contemporary* periods of Pentecostalism, respectively, along with an assessment of the association with and influence of evangelicalism. Furthermore, the chapter will discuss those elements that constitute Pentecostal biblical hermeneutics. Given that the object of Pentecostal hermeneutics is the biblical text and that the approach to that text is often specified as the Historical-Critical Method[67], the chapter will conclude with an exploration of the key principles of the Historical-Critical Method and how it has been understood and adopted within the tradition.

To contribute to the overall discussion, chapter six will consider how another tradition, considered completely "other", the Catholic tradition, has wrestled with similar hermeneutical issues. More importantly, how and in what ways have those issues been identified and addressed, and are they enlightening in terms of potential frameworks for more rigorously engaging with the Pentecostal tradition? The chapter will focus on documents that emerged during, or in the wake of, the major conciliar gathering of recent times, the Second Vatican Council. Specifically, the dogmatic constitution *Dei Verbum* and the *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church.*

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[67] While I recognised that there are multiple methods, for the most part, I will be referring to Historical-Critical Method in the singular, is of course, a misnomer.

The final chapter and conclusion will reflect on the implications of this study and offer a collation of insights gained and notes on future studies and their application to professional practice.

Chapter Two: Survey

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will describe the survey methodology, present the survey results, and provide a general discussion before developing the findings and relating them to the subsequent chapters and the overall research focus.

2.2 Methodology

For the current study, I developed a questionnaire[1] following best practices. The questionnaire focussed on closed-ended questions, which provided quantitative data for analysis. Open-ended questions were used sparingly to avoid survey fatigue. When using scales as answer options, it is best practice to be consistent with the scales, as such consistency was maintained with the formatting of the survey questions. Biased questions were also avoided to allow the respondent's opinion to be solicited organically. Before the questionnaire was distributed, it was tested to isolate any possible errors or design issues.

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[1] The survey is a cross-sectional study. This has been selected over a longitudinal design. For a longitudinal study, data collection for higher education students would require an extended period, typically between three to six years, for those in full-time study in the awards under analysis. However, a longitudinal design could be utilised for future studies.

The questionnaire related to four primary areas of inquiry: The first area elicited information relevant to the participants' demographic status and included age, sex, ministry involvement, and approaches to matters of faith. The second area was related to study and church ministry. It comprised questions on such matters as academic progression, the reason or motivation for study, the nature and scale of previous study, and participants' current role within a local church context. The third area of the survey concerned the Old Testament[2] (OT), preaching, and teaching. It included questions concerned with reading the OT, Bible translation(s), sermon preparation, the importance of what is understood as 'original meaning', contemporary application, and testimony sharing. The fourth and final area focused on OT engagement. The data was then analysed across the four questionnaire areas to identify relationships between responses.

Much like Rickie Moore, I approach this study as "one who is consciously attempting to integrate… Pentecostal vocation and perspectives with critical Old Testament scholarship"[3]. Thus, I chose biblical texts commonly related to creation care to measure engagement with OT literature in the fourth part of the questionnaire. The primary rationale for selecting this theme is the connectedness with the eschatological concern of Pentecostals[4], traditionally concentrating on missionary activity leading to an apparent disregard vis-à-vis the wider social responsibility of the Church concerning

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[2] I acknowledge that the term 'Hebrew Bible' or 'Israel's Scriptures' are more neutral descriptors of the Christian term 'Old Testament', the use of which implies, some would suggest in a derogatory way, that these books are 'old'. I use the term 'Old Testament' as it is readily recognised by the Pentecostal community, particularly by the participants of the survey questionnaire that forms part of thesis. I feel to use the neutral terms 'Hebrew Bible', or 'Israel's' Scriptures' would cause unnecessary confusion.

[3] Rickie D. Moore, "Canon and Charisma in the Book of Deuteronomy," in *Pentecostal Hermeneutics: A Reader*, ed. Lee Roy Martin (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 16.

[4] As noted in the introduction.

environmental matters.[5] Shane Clifton summarises the logical outcome of this traditional eschatological concern when he remarks, "there is little point in focusing attention on a doomed environment made even less significant by the shadow of eternal life in heaven (or death in hell)."[6] The texts selected were Genesis 1:28 and Isaiah 45:18. Although the texts themselves reflect paradigmatic statements on creation theology, I believe the theme and texts chosen for analysis provide an appropriate way of examining the apparent Pentecostal concern for literalism within the Pentecostal ecclesial practice.

2.2.1 Participation

Participants were current or former students of AC who had completed or were currently undertaking the following awards: BTh (Bachelor of Theology), BMin (Bachelor of Ministry), BBM (Bachelor of Business/Ministry), or BCM (Bachelor of Contemporary Ministry)[7]. Participants were English-speaking students only.[8] The number of respondents for the survey analysis was 126[9] (a response rate of 32%). While the survey

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[5] Robby Waddell, "Apocalyptic Sustainability: The Future of Pentecostal Ecology," in *Perspectives in Pentecostal Eschatologies: World without End*, ed. Peter Althouse and Robby Waddell (Cambridge, U.K.: James Clarke and Company, 2012), 103.

[6] Shane Clifton, "Preaching the 'Full Gospel' in the Context of Global Environmental Crisis," in *The Spirit Renews the Face of the Earth: Pentecostal Forays in Science and Theology of Creation*, ed. Amos Yong (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2009), 120. Clifton further notes, "that Pentecostals are not alone in their failure to prioritise environmental issues and develop an ecological ethos. The Christian tradition as a whole…have been widely criticised for their "otherworldly" orientation and their concomitant dogmatic rejection of "this worldly" concerns". Ibid., 118. According to Vondey, "Pentecostal eschatology culminates in an apocalyptic mandate to go and seek the lost, to proclaim Christ as king and to bring the world into God's kingdom." Wolfgang Vondey, "The Full Gospel: A Liturgical Hermeneutic of Pentecost," in *The Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology*, ed. Wolfgang Vondey (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2020), 180.

[7] The BMin degree replaced the BCM degree in 2013.

[8] AC has both an English speaking and Korean Speaking Higher Education Program and Campus.

[9] While a total of 143 students responded to the survey questionnaire. Two respondents were excluded due to age parameters. One respondent was outside the age parameters of the questionnaire, and one respondent did not specify age. Four respondents were excluded as they only responded to the first seven demographic questions.11 respondents were excluded as they did not identify with Pentecostals in terms

responses are not representative of all students within the above awards, they offer insight into patterns and trends that may assist future engagement with and teaching of the Bible within AC and the broader Pentecostal community in Australia.

2.2.2 Data Collection

As the process of ethics review helps to balance the interests of research participants, researchers, and the University, ethics approval was sought through the standard and required University processes, policies and procedures[10] as the research intended to interact with participants and the data collected. Following the completion and submission of an ethics application. Ethics approval was granted by the Australian Catholic University HREC[11] and the director of research at AC before the questionnaire was distributed.

The online survey platform SurveyMonkey was used to generate the questionnaire. Following a request, AC provided a list of participants' e-mail addresses in line with the research ethics protocols. On 17th July 2017, a link to the questionnaire was issued via e-mail at the researcher's request. This invitation was followed by two e-mail reminders on 25th August 2017 and 6th October 2017. Finally, an invitation to participate was also

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of approaches to matters of faith. See question 8 in the survey questionnaire. If we scale up those excluded on both age-related issues and identification with Pentecostals, the number of possible participants was 390. At the time of the survey, the original total number of potential participants was 429. This figure is based on 112 current Bachelor of Theology (BTh) students, 84 current Bachelor of Ministry (BMin) students, 39 current Bachelor of Business/Bachelor of Ministry (BBM) students, no current Bachelor of Contemporary Ministry (BCM) students (this is due to the fact the BCM award has ceased to be offered at the time the survey questionnaire was completed), and a total of 194 graduates. Of the 126 respondents for the survey analysis, 30 had not completed Introduction to the Bible subject BIB101 (or equivalent) and Biblical Hermeneutics BIB201. Therefore, the number of respondents utilised for survey analysis is 96.

[10] Follow link for ethics approval process. Ethics approval process (5).pdf

[11] See appendix 1 for a copy of the ethics approval certificate.

posted on the AC Moodle learning platform. Access to the questionnaire was limited until 31ˢᵗ October 2017. The data collected was non-identifiable. Although demographic data was collected, there was no access to or knowledge of the identity of any participant.

2.2.3 Limitations

An inherent limitation in survey research whereby data collection is via the last known e-mail address is 'notification reliability'. Multiple participant e-mail addresses were not current, and it is impossible to know how many students received notification of the survey.[12] Notification reliability would have impacted the graduate cohort more than current students, as the request to participate was also posted on the opening page of AC's learning platform, to which all current students have access.

It must also be noted that some respondents did not respond to all survey questions, resulting in missing data. The number of responses used to analyse each question is provided in appendix 2. Further limitations are noted due to the use of the Likert scale for several questions. The limitations of subjectivity and what an individual's idea about what they believe to be strong or moderate agreement (or disagreement) indicate.

The selected texts in the final section of the survey are *not* the entire text of any one book but one section of this corpus. Although there are limitations to this approach, the

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[12] Although read notices could have been used here, they are not necessarily helpful in establishing how many participants may have read the email request and then chose not to participate in the survey questionnaire. Sixteen known emails did not reach their destination.

texts are used to draw attention to the reading practices of participants and are not an exegesis or a critical study of the text itself—instead, the principles observed in the documented reading practice attempt to isolate the use of critical engagement.

2.3 Results

This section will analyse the findings from the survey questionnaire for each of the four primary areas of inquiry.

2.3.1 Demographic Information

Based on the demographic responses to the first section of the survey questionnaire, the broad characteristics of the group under analysis can be seen in *Figures 1. – 4. below*.

Figure 1. Gender of Respondents
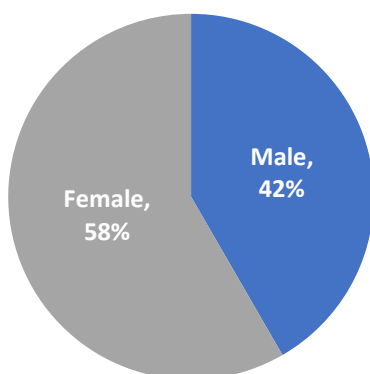
Figure 2. Age of Respondents
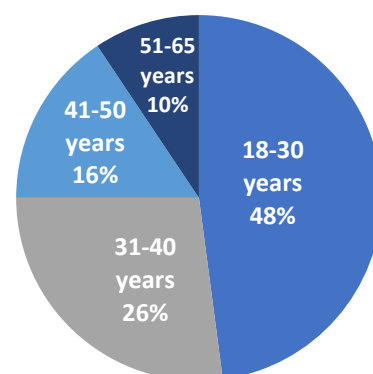
Figure 3. Ministry Credential
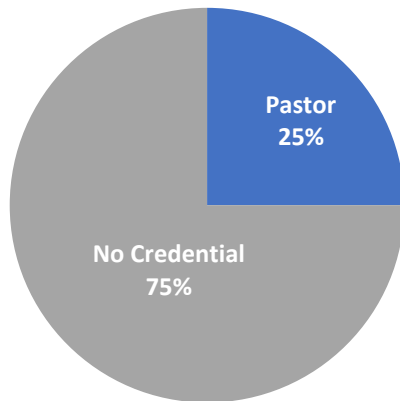
Figure 4. Ministry Involvement
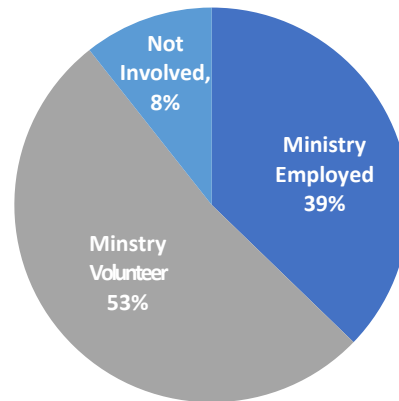
To summarise the figures above, both males and females are well represented. The respondents comprised 40 males and 56 females (*Figure 1*). They ranged from 19 to 65 years (*Figure 2.*), with a mean of 34.0 years (SD =10.5). 91.7% (n=88) of respondents were directly involved in Church-based ministry, either in a paid role (full or part-time) or in a volunteer capacity.[13] 25% (n=24) of respondents are pastors (credentialled ministers).[14]

Finally, the demographic section of the survey measured affiliation to a specific tradition. Participants responded to a forced-choice question: "Do you currently identify with any of the following approaches to matters of faith?"[15] Options were: Catholic,

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[13] The nature of this role, mainly as related to the local church, is further explored in section three of the survey questionnaire. Specifically, see responses to questions 16 and 17.

[14] ACC Pastors hold either a Provisional Minister's Credential (PMC) or an Ordained Minister's Credential (OMC).

[15] Question 5 in the survey questionnaire.

Charismatic, Evangelical, Pentecostal, Reformed, or Other. Participants were also asked to indicate how many years they had been a part of the selected tradition.[16] All respondents under analysis identified as either Pentecostal or Charismatic in approaches to matters of faith. The average time as a part of the selected tradition was approximately 19 years.[17]

2.3.2 Academic Study and Church-Based Ministry

The respondents were divided into three groups founded on academic progression: *New*, *Existing*, and *Graduate*. These groups were selected to measure possible varying responses throughout the study period. Based on the equivalent full-time student load (EFTSL)[18], *New* respondents were current students who had not completed the first year of full-time study. A full academic year and full-time enrolment are equivalent to eight subjects at AC. *Existing* respondents had completed at least one year of full-time study but had not completed their chosen award.[19] *Graduate* respondents were those who had completed their chosen award. Respondents comprised 37 *New*, 29 *Existing*, and 60 *Graduate*.

The fundamental concern of this thesis is to determine whether critical skills developed by students within biblical studies are utilised and applied within practical ministry settings. This provides the rationale for questioning the awards selected for participants of the

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[16] Question 7 in the survey questionnaire.

[17] The mean result was 14.95 years, SD =10.5.

[18] ." Statistics report on TEQSA registered higher education providers, 20th August 2018 https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/statistics-report-teqsa-registered-higher-education-providers-2018 Accessed 1 November 2020.

[19] BTh, BMin, BCM are 3-year full-time study programs. The BBM is the exception here and is a 4-year full-time study program.

survey questionnaire. Each award requires completing core subjects in biblical studies, namely *Introduction to the Bible* and *Biblical Hermeneutics*.[20] The descriptions and several of the outcomes of these subjects are relevant to this study.[21] For example, *Introduction to the Bible* is described as follows,

> This unit is an initial exploration of the biblical story as developed in the Old and New Testaments. It aims to provide a historical, literary, theological and thematic introduction to the Bible. The discussion includes the development of the biblical canon and the origins of its literature. It will also help students confidently read and exegete Scripture as part of their ministry and devotional lives.[22]

The subject describes the overall content, storyline, and significance of the Bible. It outlines how the Bible came into existence and attained its canonical structure. It provides an overview of the historical, cultural, and social context of the Bible. Throughout the subject, a basic exegetical process is explained. Two exegetical essays form part of the *Introduction to the Bible* assessment.[23] Students must determine the genre of a specific passage and study the historical background to establish what is known about authorship and the original audience. Literary context, major themes, and

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[20] A question is asked to affirm whether these two Bible subjects have been completed. See question 13 in the survey questionnaire.

[21] As described in the subject handouts, outcomes for *Introduction to the Bible* relate to understanding the overall historical, cultural, and social context of the Bible, identifying various genres of biblical texts, and demonstrating an ability to apply appropriate reading strategies to these genres, and discussing principles and insights derived from the study of the Bible for contemporary life and ministry. Outcomes for *Biblical Hermeneutics* relate to applying hermeneutical principles to interpret passages of Scripture in light of their historical and grammatical context, demonstrating the ability to utilise hermeneutical principles in the preparation of sermons and bible studies within different contexts, analysing key critical approaches to the study of the biblical text, and demonstrating critical engagement with both the primary biblical materials and secondary literature from a range of perspectives.

[22] As described in the subject handout for *Introduction to the Bible*, BIB101, 2018. https://he.moodle.ac.edu.au/moodle/course/search.php?search=bib101&perpage=20&page=1

[23] There is also an exam that comprises 50 knowledge-based questions on the overall content.

cultural, social, and historical background must also be identified as part of the assessment process.

Furthermore, the assessments require consideration of a possible contemporary application to the Christian community at a corporate and personal level. The use of appropriate source material for exegetical work is also assessed. Similarly, taking a brief look at *Biblical Hermeneutics*, the subject is described as follows; "The unit aims to examine the critical approaches to the biblical text, focusing on the hermeneutical principles involved with interpretation and application in 21st-century ministry contexts."[24]

The subject explores the goal and history of interpretation. It discusses the various genres of the Bible and how to apply appropriate reading strategies to each. The subject explores the relevance of the Bible for the 21st century and attempts to discover the original application(s) intended by the author. *Biblical Hermeneutics* explores contextualisation, evaluates the specificity of applications to their original historical contexts, and considers if they are transferable. In other words, are the situations similar, and if so, how are the principle(s) to be applied? Having found the principles(s) that led to the specific application "back then", the principle(s) are translated into appropriate and corresponding applications "now".[25] The two written assessments for *Biblical*

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[24] As described in the subject handout. 2019
https://he.moodle.ac.edu.au/moodle/course/view.php?id=5013

[25] Subject content is based on lecture material. The subject also briefly engages with Postmodern hermeneutics and Pentecostal Hermeneutics.

Hermeneutics[26] allow for an opportunity to apply these principles. The first requires students to take a specific Bible text and present their chosen text's message in a relevant and creative way for a 21st century audience.[27] The second assessment requires the student to outline and apply an interpretive method to a biblical passage before critiquing the method.[28]

All respondents under analysis had completed both *Introduction to the Bible* and *Biblical Hermeneutics*.[29] Establishing prior knowledge was also essential in analysing the application of and general engagement with the Bible. Participants indicated the highest level of theological training they had completed before beginning the degree programme at AC[30]. Only one respondent[31] specified previous theological training at the tertiary level or above. 62.5% (n=60) of the group had studied at the vocational level[32]. The remainder had no formal theological training.

In reflecting on the interpretation of the Bible, this thesis was explicitly concerned with applying that interpretation within practical ministry settings as opposed to personal devotion. As such, it is essential to consider participants' specific roles within their

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[26] There is also an exam that assesses subject knowledge

[27] The creative piece is designed to allow students to express their personality and creativity and think critically about how the text of the Bible might be significant for the 21st-century. As described in the 2019 subject handout, https://he.moodle.ac.edu.au/moodle/course/view.php?id=5013

[28] Ibid.

[29] Based on responses to question 13.

[30] Question 14 from the survey questionnaire.

[31] The respondent had begun study in ministry overseas, but the study was incomplete.

There were 95 responses to this question.

[32] This includes Certificate IV, Diploma and Advanced Diploma levels.

ministry context. Question 17 required participants to respond to the forced-choice question, "In your ministry context, what are the main tasks that you carry out?". Responses included teaching people about the Christian faith, training people for ministry, counselling people, and offering prayer and spiritual guidance. As we saw in the demographic data section, 91.7% (n=88) of respondents were involved in ministry within their church context.[33] Of this group, 88.6% (n=85) [34] were involved in a role that directly engaged with the Bible and subsequently applied it in an ecclesial setting. This figure is relatively high and reveals the potential influence *learning* within the academy can have within the ecclesial setting.

Question 18 sought insight into the motivation for a student's initial enrolment at AC. On a ten-point scale, participants rated their reason for enrolling in a bachelor's degree programme at AC with a biblical studies component. 89.5% (n=85) of respondents[35] indicated it was "For personal growth". 66.7% (n=62)[36] of respondents said it was "To prepare for Church-based ministry".[37] This figure is relatively low, given that AC is the national training college of the Australian Christian Churches (ACC), and the awards undertaken by respondents are theology or ministry based. However, 91.7% (n=88)[38] of

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[33] See question 6.

[34] The remaining 11.4% (n=11) comprised of roles that involved administration and media (sound and lighting).

[35] Ninety-five participants responded to this question. 89.5% (n=85) indicates a positive response. 10.5% (n=10) were unsure, and there were no negative responses. Positive responses are taken in the range of 7-10, negative responses are assumed to be in the range of 1-4, and the neutral range is taken to be 5-6. The mean response for all respondents across the ten-point scale was 8.8 (SD =1.4).

[36] Ninety-three participants responded to this question. The mean response for all respondents across the ten-point scale was 7.5 (SD=2.7).

[37] Though 15.1% (n=14) were unsure about this, 18.2 % (n=17) responded negatively.

[38] All ninety-six participants responded to this question. The mean response for all respondents across the ten-point scale was 8.7 (SD=2.6).

respondents also stated that the reason for enrolling was "To enhance the interpretation of the Bible". Furthermore, 96.9% (n=93)[39] indicated it was "To gain knowledge". Both these figures suggest that the purpose of enrolling may not necessarily be in preparation for a Church-based ministry context. That is not to say that the learning from the academy will not be utilised in an ecclesial setting.

Further insight is proffered into establishing the purpose of academic study by analysing the responses to open-ended question 19, which asked, "What do you plan to do with your qualification?[40] The responses were initially coded and then categorised into themes. The themes of interest in this study relate to ministry and teaching. Hence two significant categories were employed, *Ministry/Teaching* and *Other*.[41] 67.0% (n=61) of respondents stated that they planned to use the qualification to pursue either a ministry or teaching role.

Question 20 related to the specific contexts within which formal academic study of the Bible should occur. Sarah Jane Lancaster, the traditional founder of Australian Pentecostalism, believed it was advantageous to understand the development of the Bible. However, she also believed it was *not* necessary to go to theological college to acquire that understanding. According to Lancaster, "[A] member of the true Church,

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[39] All ninety-six participants responded to this question. The mean response for all respondents across the ten-point scale was 9.25 (SD=1.1).

[40] The researcher and another biblical studies faculty member coded the responses into themes separately. Once coding had been completed, differences were identified, and a moderator was used to help categorise discrepancies.

[41] *Other* includes those who want to pursue "further study" but do not clearly indicate why. There is the possibility that these responses may plan to use the qualification for ministry and/or teaching. 12.1% (n=11) of responses were in this category. Ninety-one participants responded to this question.

which is Christ's body, should receive his training in that Church."[42] To assess the accuracy of this view, participants were asked to respond to the forced-choice question, "Do you think formal academic study of the biblical text should occur within the context of the local church or at an academic institute?" Options were: Local Church, Academic Institute, Both or Unsure. The results show that only 2.1 % (n=2) of respondents believed the formal academic study of the Bible should be undertaken exclusively in a local church context. 16.7% (n=16) of respondents believe it should be undertaken exclusively in an academic institute. 79.1% (n=76) believe a formal academic study of the Bible should be undertaken in the local church *and* an academic institute. As the traditional founder of Australian Pentecostalism, Lancaster's views have been highly influential. Indeed, such views may be held to contribute to the success of Bible colleges directly attached to large Churches, traditionally recognised as Pentecostal, for example, Hillsong College, C3, and Planet Shakers. However, these figures also illustrate that any sharply carpentered division between an academic and ecclesial context may not necessarily exist more broadly.

2.3.3 The Old Testament, Preaching and Teaching

This section of the survey relates to engagement with the OT. It seeks to establish participants' concern for the original biblical languages and compares English translations and their use. Question 21 assessed the use of various Bible translations for personal devotion, academic study, and preaching.[43] The data indicated that 13.3%

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[42] *Good News* 12:8, September 1923, 12. *Good News* was the magazine of the earliest formal Pentecostal grouping in Australia.

[43] Ninety participants responded to this question.

(n=12) of respondents used a single Bible translation for personal devotion.[44] This figure is surprisingly low as it would be expected that a more significant number would employ a single translation for personal use to maintain consistency in daily reading and as an aid in memorisation. The remaining 86.7% (n=78) used multiple Bible translations, typically three to four.[45]

For academic study, 18.2% (n=16) of respondents used a single Bible translation. Fourteen of whom relied solely on the NIV Bible translation for academic work. While the above percentage is relatively high, indicating approximately one in five respondents, it is consistent among *New*, *Graduate,* and *Pastors*. However, it is closer to one in ten for the group *Existing*, indicating that students use multiple translations at higher levels of study, whilst those at the start of their studies or those who have completed their studies do not use multiple translations.

Students are encouraged to use a translation that focuses on formal equivalence for academic studies, such as exegetical work. The choice of the NIV as the sole translation is unusual for academic work as it is a mixture of dynamic and formal equivalence. While the NIV translation is easy to read and balances "literal" translation focusing on meaning, it is more appropriate for reading in an ecclesial setting than an academic one.[46] Also, to get a sense of the complexities of a passage, it is recommended that students

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[44] Of this group, nine used formal correspondence style translations, 1 used Dynamic equivalence type translation and one, a paraphrased translation.

[45] The average number of Bible translations for this group is 3.6.

[46] "Which Is the Best Bible Translation?" *Bible Society* accessed 13th August 2021, https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/which-is-the-best-bible-translation/.

employ a range of translations, ideally selecting two formal equivalence translations and a dynamic equivalence translation for comparison purposes.[47] This recommendation is more consistent with the remaining 81.8% (n=72) of respondents who used multiple translations, typically between three to four. For preaching, 19.3% (n=17) of respondents used a single translation. The remaining 90.7% (n=71) used between two and five translations. These figures unexpectedly indicated that more respondents utilise multiple Bible translations for personal devotion than academic study and preaching.

As part of question 26, participants rated the following statement on a five-point scale, "When attempting to interpret an Old Testament passage, it is useful to refer to multiple modern translations" responses are summarised in *Figure 5.* below.

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[47] As there is no perfect English translation, students at AC are encouraged to use multiple Bible translations for comparison purposes, particularly in exegetical work where different nuances can be drawn out. Fee and Stuart remark, "The trouble with using only *one* translation, be it ever so good, is that one is thereby committed to the exegetical choices of that translation as the Word of God. The translation you are using may be correct, of course, but it also may be wrong." Gordon D. Fee and Douglas K. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, Fourth edition. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2014), 36.
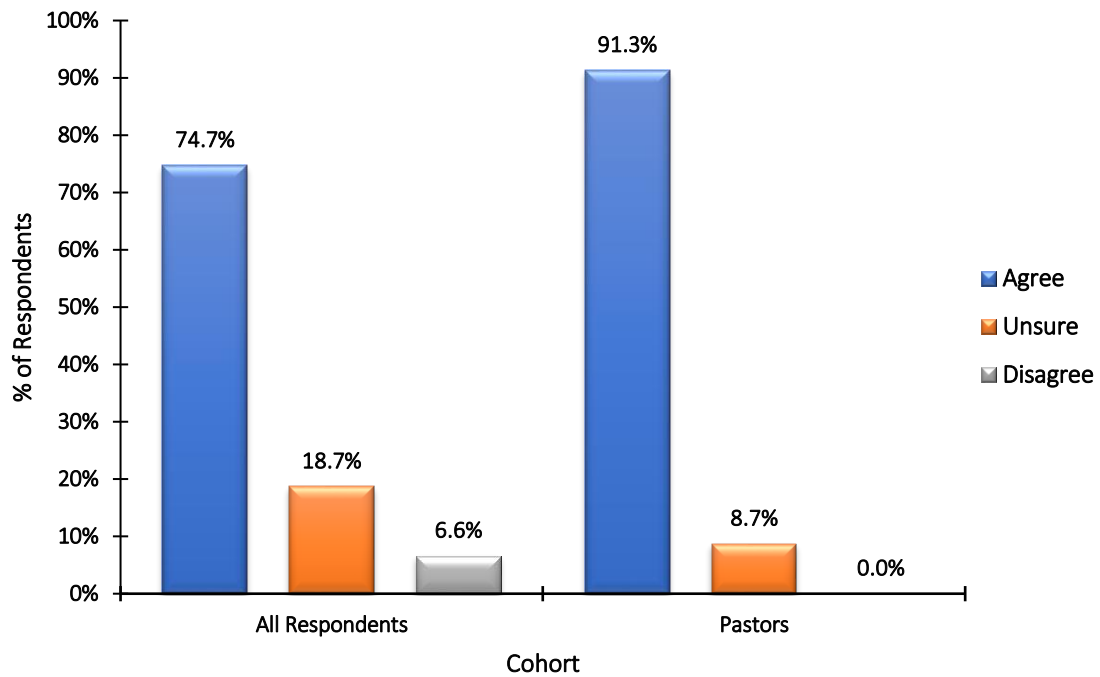
Figure 5. When attempting to interpret an Old Testament passage, it is useful to refer to multiple modern translations

The data in *Figure 5.* is derived from question 26, indicating that 91.3% (n=21) of pastors agreed it was helpful to refer to multiple translations when attempting to interpret the OT. This agreement is significantly high compared to all respondents at 74.7% (n=68), which indicates that pastors within the overall group are more consistent with what is taught at AC in their general attitude towards multiple translations rather than their praxis.
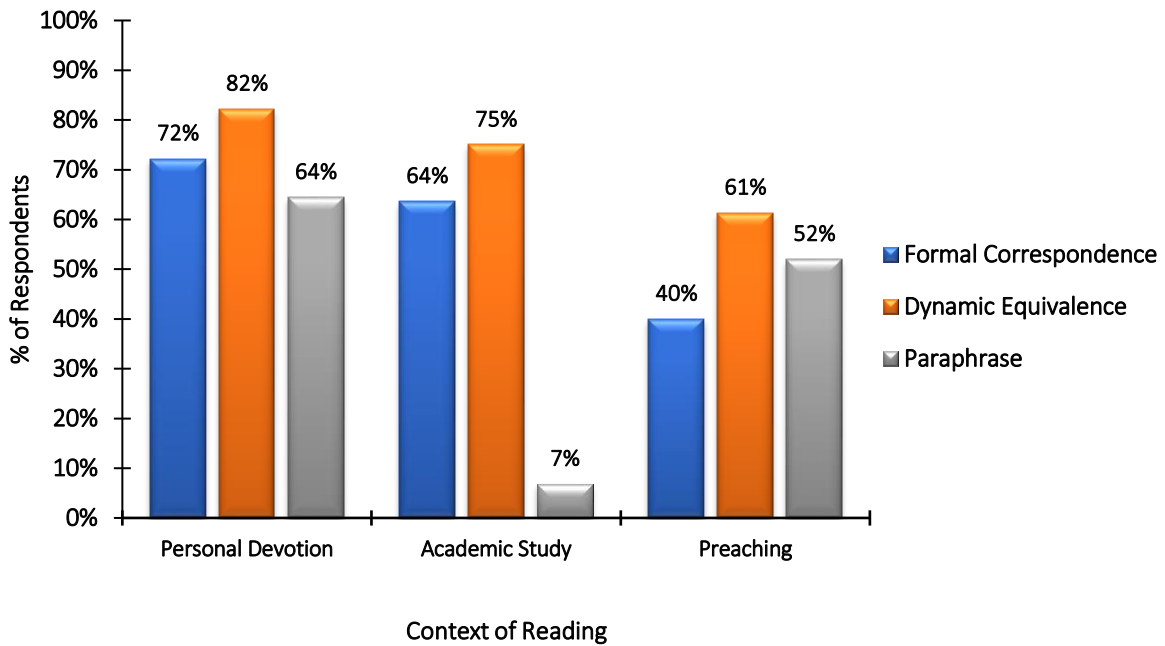
Figure 6. Bible Translations for Specific Context

Figure 6. above illustrates that the dynamic equivalence *type* translations are the most popular across each context. Of course, it must be recognised that there is value in the concept of "dynamic" or "meaning" equivalence translations, particularly in a congregational setting when a sermon is being preached. While the paraphrase translation is relatively well represented across the "personal devotional" and "preaching" contexts, 64.8% (n=57) and 52.3% (n=46) represent only 6.8% (n=6) in the academic context. From the academy's perspective, it is encouraging to note that all respondents who utilised a paraphrase translation consulted at least two other translations, either the dynamic equivalence or formal correspondence variety.

Question 22 considered how much of the OT respondents had read. Bearing in mind the specific context of respondents, namely, attending the national college of the ACC and undertaking specific awards comprising a focus on biblical studies, one would expect a relatively high number of respondents, particularly pastors, to have read most of the OT. The results of this question can be seen below in *Figure 7*.
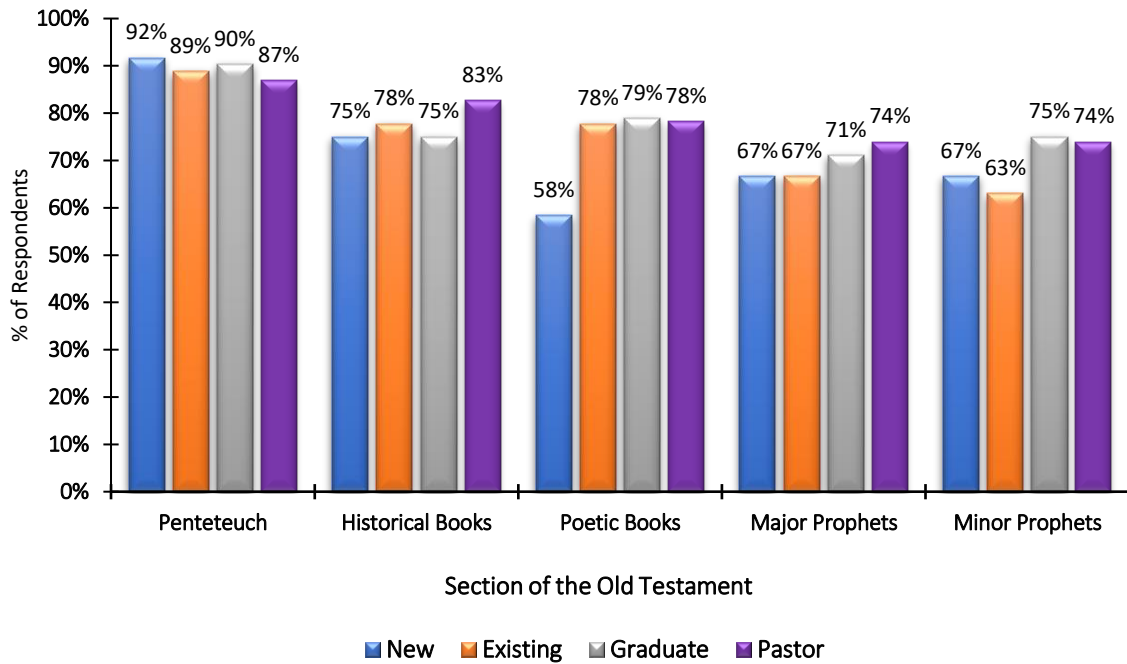
Figure 7. Reading the Old Testament[48]

Considering the Bible is the medium with which Pentecostals associate the experience of the Holy Spirit,[49] and considering Pentecostals see themselves as *people of the Spirit* and *people of the Book*[50], only 58.2% (n=53) of respondents have read the OT in its entirety. This figure seems relatively low when one considers the average time stated as part

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[48] As previous mentioned a Pastor is a credentialled minister within the ACC.

[49] Peter D. Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience: An Ecumenical Encounter*, 132.

[50] Scott A. Ellington, "Scripture: Finding One's Place in God's Story," in *The Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology*, ed. Wolfgang Vondey (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2020), 65. Ma, "Biblical Studies in the Pentecostal Tradition: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," 54; Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience: An Ecumenical Encounter*, 132.

of the tradition is 19 years.[51] One would assume more *people of the Book* would have read it. However, it is encouraging to see a slight increase from *New* students at 41.7% (n=5) to *Existing* students at 60.7% (n=17) and *Graduate* at 63.5% (n=33). For pastors, this figure was slightly higher at 65.2% (n=15).

Five respondents had not read any of the sections of the OT in their entirety. Three of these five respondents were pastors who had graduated and were employed in ministry positions. Data from the survey also shows that the Pentateuch is the most widely read section of the OT across all cohorts, with an average readership of 90.1% (n=82).

Further analysis of the reading of other sections of the OT, namely the Historical Books, Poetic Books, Major Prophets, and Minor Prophets, indicate an overall readership of 75.8% (n=69), 74.7% (n=68), 69.2% (n=63), and 70.3% (n=64), respectively. The figures for the readership of the Prophets are relatively low. One would expect Pentecostal readers to be drawn to the prophetic books based on the importance of a sense of "calling" akin to the OT prophets and the significance placed on the eschatological fulfilment in the book of Joel[52], which "enabled the Pentecostals to make a connection between the pouring out of the Spirit with the "early and Latter Rain' motif"[53].Furthermore, Pentecostal readers emphasise healing in the atonement from reading Isaiah 53.

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[51] See page 25 and responses to Question 7, along with the context of study.

[52] As noted in the introduction. From the outset, Pentecostals have interpreted the "early rain" or "autumn rain" from Joel 2:23 as the miraculous events that took place on the day of Pentecost, which are described in Acts 2:17-21. Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibilities of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2005), 83.

[53] Kenneth J Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture, and Community* (Cleveland, Tennessee: CPT Press, 2009), 149.

Given the significance of Spirit infusion for Pentecostals, combined with a *study* of the Bible, question 23 asks, "How much time would you typically allow to prepare a sermon?". The responses varied from two hours to precisely seventy-two hours. The average time spent in sermon preparation across all respondents was approximately eight and a half hours.[54] Analysis for pastors within the group indicated a slightly shorter time of approximately eight hours.[55] Unfortunately, it is impossible to analyse this data further to establish how much time is spent in reflection, waiting for inspiration, praise, or studying.

Question 24 considers how preachers decide what to preach. Grey notes, "Pentecostal preachers do not follow a lectionary, but are "led by the spirit" in their choice of texts to discuss".[56] While this may generally be true, this survey considered other possibilities. Participants were asked to respond to the following forced-choice question; "If you were preaching within your church context, how would you typically decide what to preach? Options were Pray and discern what God is saying before selecting a topic or scripture; Usually given a topic to preach on by leadership; Usually given a Bible passage by leadership to preach on; Have favourite passages which you preach from; Relate Bible passages to favourite topics; Other (please specify).

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[54] There were 76 responses to this question with a calculated average of 8.59 hours.

[55] The calculated average is 7.89 hours. Twenty-three pastors responded to this question.

[56] Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 17.

The first option reflects Grey's observation noted above, and the responses indicate that a little over half, 53.9% (n=48), are a part of the group who pray and discern what God is saying before selecting a topic or scripture.[57] The other significant group, at 23.6% (n=21), are those given a topic to preach on by leadership. This figure is relatively high compared to the next option, at 5.6% (n=5), whereby the leadership provides the Bible passage to be preached. Of course, it could be argued that the "led by the spirit" component of the preaching process is carried out by the leadership, who are ultimately praying and discerning what God is saying before a topic or Bible passage is suggested to the preacher. So, overall, the data suggests significant autonomy on the preacher's part regarding which Bible passage to preach from (94.4% (n=84)) or which topic to preach about (74.6% (n=78)).[58]

The next question in the survey, number 26, was framed around a range of preaching-related statements. Respondents replied to each statement on the following scale, *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Neutral/Unsure*, *Disagree*, and *Strongly Disagree*. The first statement was, "It is important to establish the original contextual meaning of a biblical passage before it can be applied." Grey notes, "As Pentecostal readers bring…[a]presupposition of charismatic experience to their reading of biblical texts, there is also an expectation that the Spirit will be encountered in the reading process"[59]. To understand the range of responses to the survey question, one must appreciate that the

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[57] Compare to responses for part of question 26, on subsequent pages, which considers the statement "Before preaching/teaching from a biblical passage; it is important to pray and ask God for guidance."

[58] This is also true if the preacher has a favourite topic from which to preach (4.5% of responses n=4), or a favourite passage to preach from (3.4 % of responses n=3), as it is ultimately a decision made by the preacher.

[59] Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 17.

Spirit can speak directly to a contemporary situation for Pentecostals and beyond the original contextual meaning.[60] According to Grey,

> The experience of the Spirit provides meaning, not just application; and since the experience of the Spirit differs according to the community and the individual members of the community, so also the meaning of the text differs according to the individual context in which it is read. This provides multiple interpretations according to the individual's experience and potentially results in multiple meanings.[61]

The responses to the first statement in question 26 indicated that 94.5% (n=86) of respondents[62] considered it important to establish the original contextual meaning of a biblical passage before that meaning could be applied.[63] Only 2.2% (n=2) of respondents disagreed with the statement.[64] So while it is acknowledged that, for Pentecostals, the Spirit *can speak* beyond the original context, the clear majority of respondents wished to engage with and understand the original contextual meaning before applying the text to the contemporary context. These figures are significant as they indicate that the original contextual meaning is not considered to be of secondary importance. Instead, they suggest that for respondents, original contextual meaning, in so far as that can be exegeted or understood, is somehow determinant of possible contemporary meaning. This approach suggests a sensitivity to the dangers of one-sided interpretations through

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[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid.

[62] There were 91 responses to this question.

[63] 62.6% (n=57) of respondents strongly agreed, and 31.9% (n=29) of respondents agreed with the statement.

[64] Nobody strongly disagreed with the statement, and the remaining 3.3% (n=3) of respondents were unsure.

the lens of a particular culture or specific way of thinking[65], which Didier Pollefyt and Reimund Bieringer describe as "a ventriloquist of *a priori* fixed views."[66]

According to Grey, "The Old Testament text provides a pool of language and experience which Pentecostal readers draw from and identify with, regardless of the context or historical distance."[67] While Grey recognises the importance of context within a specific cultural setting, she asserts that it limits the reader's role and the multiple potential meanings consistent with postmodernism.[68] Grey further notes that Pentecostal readers tend to appropriate the text according to their own contemporary culture rather than consider its significance in the ancient culture. Hence, Readers demonstrate a limited recognition of the cultural differences between the ancient and contemporary contexts.[69]

The question of the importance of ancient culture and context relates to the subsequent statement from question 26, "It is not important to understand the culture of Ancient Israel when preaching/teaching from the Old Testament"[70]. The overall responses to this statement are indicated in *Figure 8.* below.

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[65] Didier Pollefyt and Reimund Bieringer, "The Role of the Bible in Religious Education: Reconsidered: Risks and Challenges in Teaching the Bible," *IJPT* 9 (2006): 128.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 103.

[68] Ibid. Grey remarks, "Pentecostal readings share a presupposition with postmodernity that the text is autonomous and meanings are multivocal. However, unlike many postmodern readings, the Pentecostal community has not dismissed meta-narrative." Ibid., 104.

[69] Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 134.

[70] While positive and negative questions can measure the same underlying attitude and have equal validity, it must be noted that negatively worded questions can be biased. According to N. Kamoen et al., "research shows that respondents are more inclined to disagree with negative questions than to agree with equivalent positive ones."
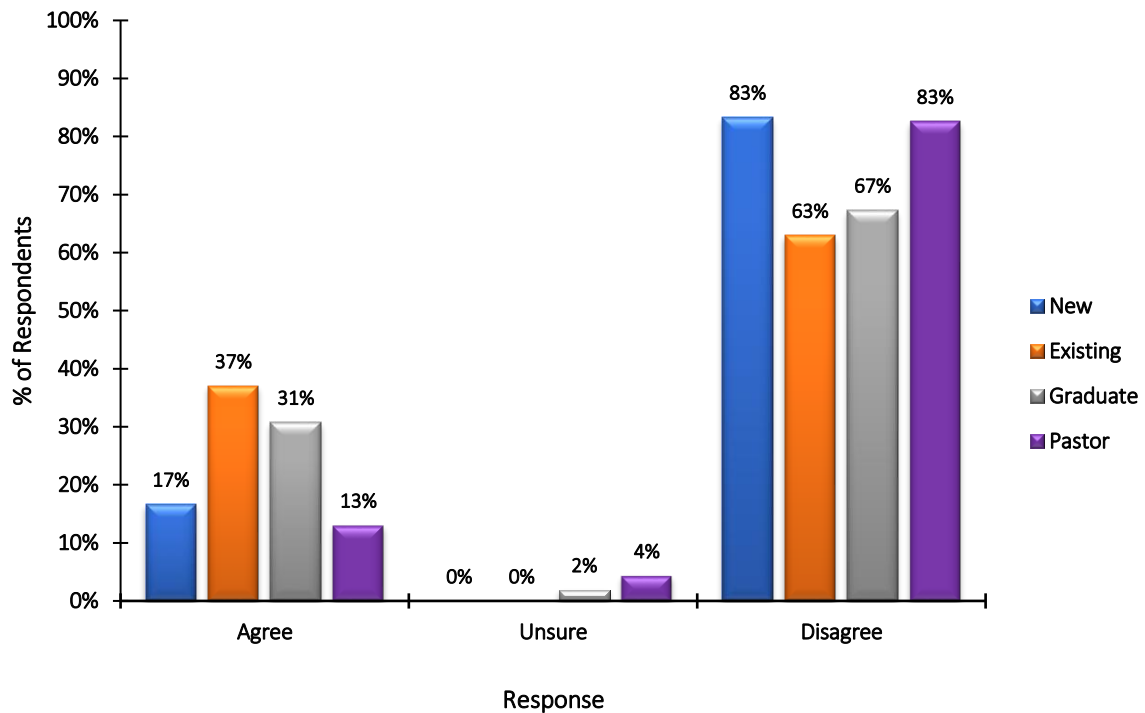
Figure 8. It is not important to understand the culture of Ancient Israel when preaching/teaching from the Old Testament

The data from *Figure 8.* indicates that 68.1% (n=62) of all respondents considered understanding the culture of Ancient Israel important for interpreting the OT. This figure is relatively low compared with the 94.5% (n=86) of respondents to the earlier question who considered establishing original contextual meaning to be important. The inconsistency with these figures may be due to the wording of the question. While positive and negative questions can measure the same underlying attitude and have equal validity, according to N. Kamoen et al., "research shows that respondents are more inclined to disagree with negative questions than to agree with equivalent positive

ones."[71] For analysis, if we consider the responses valid, there was very little uncertainty in the overall responses. Only one respondent selected the option "Neutral/Unsure", while a significant portion, 30.7% (n=12) of existing students and 30.8% (n=16) of graduates, agreed with the statement. Only 13.0% (n=3) of pastors agreed with the statement, which indicates that this group is more consistent with the academy in recognising the value of reading the Bible in light of the original cultural context. Grey suggests, "By using the text as a symbol independent of the historical and cultural context of the passage, Pentecostal readings can continue to invite the possibility of multiple readings of the text."[72]. While this may be true, the data indicates that 68.1% (n=62) of all respondents and 82.6% (n=23) of pastors in the group consider understanding the culture of Ancient Israel a necessary pre-condition when utilising or interpreting the OT for preaching purposes.

Grey's recent work on the Australian Pentecostal community and their reading approaches to *Isaiah*[73] gives some insight into the tendency of Pentecostal readings to be ahistorical with very little interest in the text's original language.[74] She remarks,

> The lack of awareness of textual issues perhaps reinforced the ahistorical nature of their readings as each participant tended to identify their particular translation as the "Word of God" rather than an English translation of an ancient text that evolved from a particular historical and social setting.[75]

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[71] N Kamoen et al., "Why Are Negative Questions Difficult to Answer? : On the Processing of Linguistic Contrasts in Surveys," *Public opinion quarterly* 81, no. 3 (2017): 615, 629.

[72] Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 104.

[73] See Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*.

[74] Ibid., 104.

[75] Ibid., 142–143.

To assess the significance placed on original languages, the next part of question 26 was related to the statement, "It is important to have a basic understanding of ancient biblical languages to interpret the Old Testament well." The responses can be seen below in *Figure 9.*
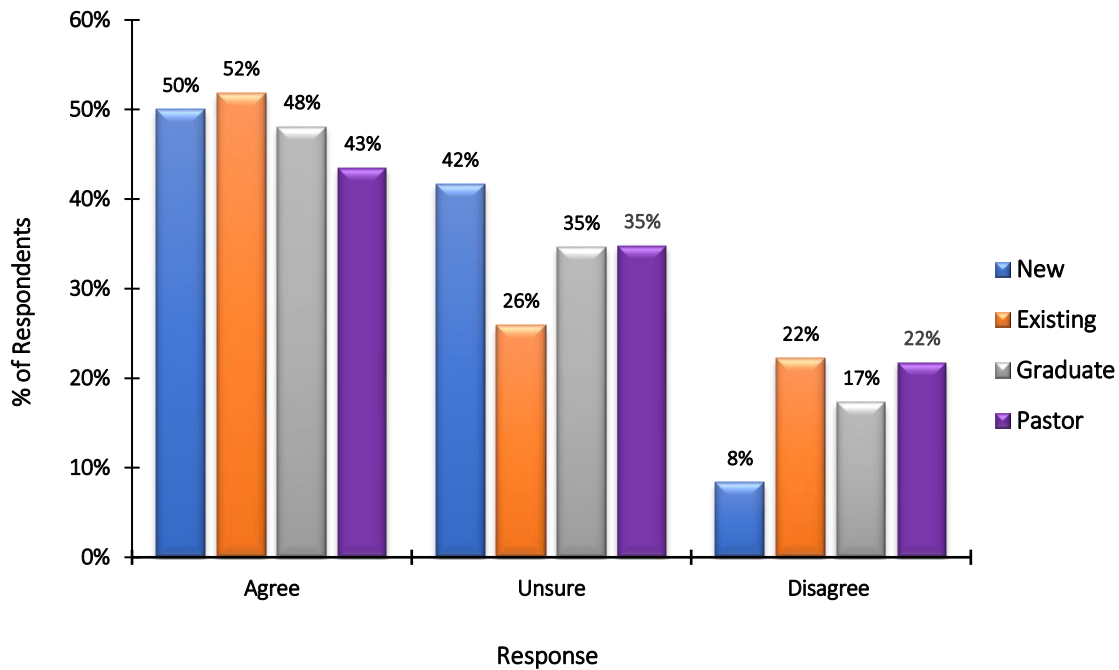
Figure 9. It is important to have a basic understanding of ancient biblical languages to interpret the Old Testament well[76]

Figure 9. indicates that agreement with the statement is relatively consistent, among approximately half of the respondents and across all cohorts. The statement elicited a relatively high level of uncertainty, with a third of all respondents selecting "Neutral/Unsure" (n=30). Pastors' uncertainty is consistent with the broader group, although marginally lower in agreement[77] and higher in disagreement with the statement. The mixed responses, primarily those around uncertainty, are possibly due to a degree

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[76] To compile *Figure 9.*, The positive responses, *Strongly Agree* and *Agree*, and the negative responses, *Strongly Disagree* and *Disagree*, have been combined to indicate a sense of general agreement and disagreement.

[77] It is worth noting that no pastors strongly agreed with the statement.

of suspicion of new interpretations of texts based on a renewed understanding of the original language, particularly those that may challenge older interpretations. Although, it should be noted that engaging with original languages can also provide new and substantial support for traditional interpretation.[78] According to Fee, while mastering biblical languages is essential at the highest level of exegesis, good exegetical work can be done even if one lacks these language skills.[79]

The subsequent statement from question 26 was, "Before preaching/teaching from a biblical passage; it is important to pray and ask God for guidance". The overall responses are indicated below in *Figure 10.*
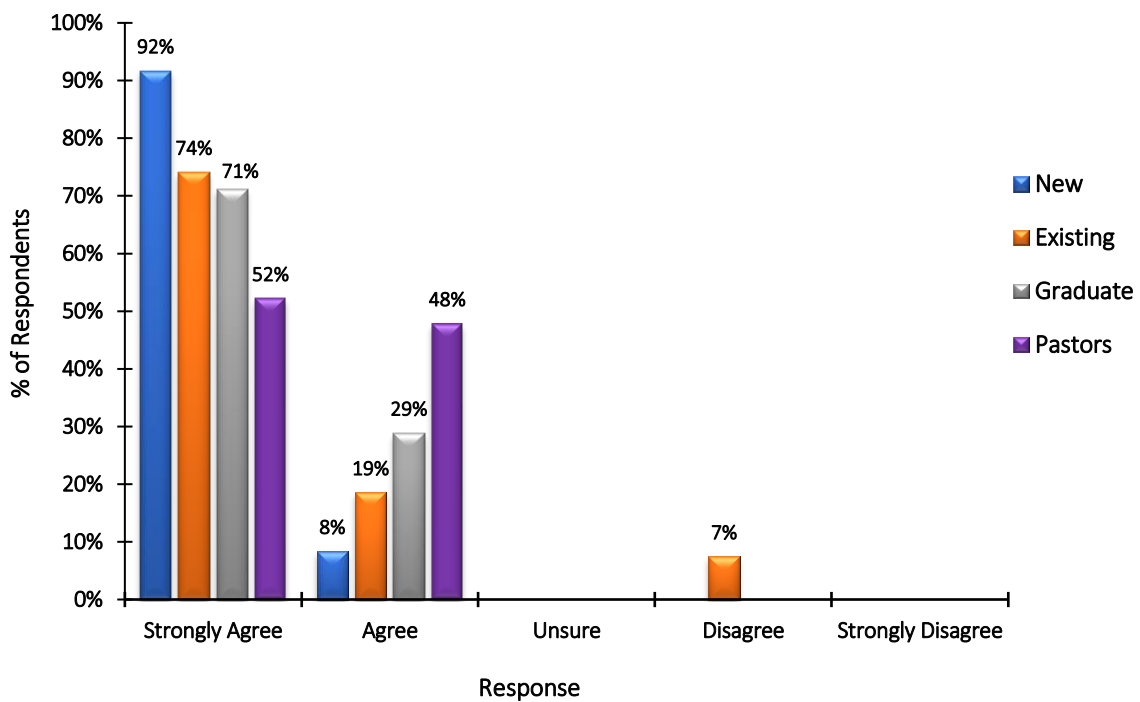
Figure 10. Before preaching/teaching from a biblical passage; it is important to pray and ask God for guidance

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[78] Stanley E. Porter, "Linguistic Criticism," ed. Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 199–201.

[79] Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 29–30.

Responses to this statement evidence an overwhelming level of agreement with the statement, with 97.8% (n=89) of all respondents signalling either agreed or strongly agreed. For pastors, the response was 100% (n=23). Initially, this may be seen to conflict with responses to question 24, which considered how one would typically decide what to preach[80]; however, question 26 relates to a part of the overall process of preaching or teaching. The process may include praying during the preparation phase of deciding what to preach or teach, or perhaps how to preach or teach. It may also include prayer during various stages of the writing process or prayer immediately before delivery. Whether one has a favourite passage or has been given a specific passage is not necessarily an indicator of seeking God's guidance before preaching or teaching from a biblical passage or an indicator of the value placed on intercession on the part of the respondent.

Interestingly, 74.7% (n=68) of all respondents "strongly agreed" with the statement in question 26, relating to the importance of praying and seeking God's guidance before preaching/teaching from a biblical passage. Although the data indicates, pastors were less enthusiastic at 52.2 % (n=12).[81] Overall, the responses highlight the value placed on prayer by Pentecostals. Steven Land suggests that prayer is the most significant activity of Pentecostals.[82] He remarks, "individual prayers are shaped by the preaching

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[80] See page 38, which deals with Question 24.

[81] The remaining pastors agreed rather than strongly agreed.

[82] Steven J Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Cleveland, Tennessee: CPT Press, 2010), 160.

and teaching of the Word."[83] However, the data that indicates 97.8% (n=89) agreement with the statement in question 26 suggests the reverse is also true; the preaching and teaching of the word is also shaped by individual prayers.

The final statement contained within question 26 was, "The literal meaning of a biblical passage is the key to contemporary application". See *Figure 11.*[84] below for overall responses.
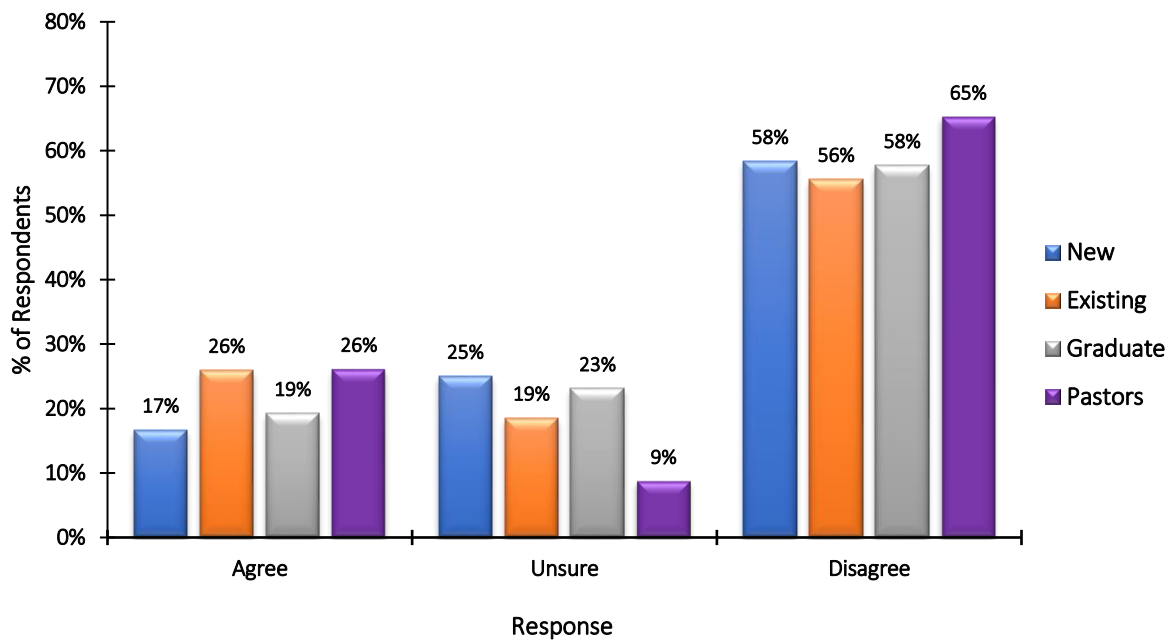
Figure 11. The literal meaning of a biblical passage is the key to contemporary application

Across all respondents, the data indicates that 20.9% (n=19) agreed[85] with the statement, 22.0% (n=20) were unsure, and 57.1% (n=52) disagreed.[86] The spread across the three

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[83] Ibid., 165.

[84] To compil*e Figure 11.*, The positive responses, *Strongly agree* and *Agree*, and the negative responses, *Strongly Disagree* and *Disagree*, have been combined to indicate a sense of general agreement and disagreement.

[85] Includes responses for Agrees and Strongly agrees.

[86] Includes responses for Disagrees and Strongly disagrees

student cohorts can be seen in *Figure 11*. No pastors "strongly agreed" with the statement, and the degree of uncertainty for pastors was significantly lower at 8.7% (n=2) than the *New*, *Existing*, and *Graduate* cohorts. Interestingly, a relatively high number of pastors, 65.2% (n=15), disagreed with the statement. These figures seem to run counter to the traditional "literalistic hermeneutic" posited for the early Pentecostal interpretive method.[87]

Following the line of enquiry of the previous question, the survey questionnaire continued with the theme of contemporary application. As part of question 27, participants rated, on a ten-point scale[88], the importance of contemporary application and the sharing of testimony when preaching or teaching from the OT. For contemporary applications, an overwhelming 92.1% (n=82).[89] Of respondents indicated that the contemporary application was important to some degree.[90] This figure is consistent with what is considered essential for Pentecostal readers; application and contextualisation.[91]

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[87] Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture, and Community*, 89; David Perry, *Spirit Baptism: The Pentecostal Experience in Theological Focus* (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2017), 9; Clifton, *Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analysing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia*, 55,77; Jacqueline Grey, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture with Spirit in Community," in *The Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology*, ed. Wolfgang Vondey (New York: Routledge, 2020), 130.

[88] On this scale, one is not important, and ten is very important. For this question, responses between 1-4 were taken as indicating not important, responses between 5-6 were taken as unsure or neutral, and responses between 7-10 were taken as important. Based on the ten-point scale, the mean value across all respondents was 8.81 (SD=1.3), and the data for pastors was almost identical at 8.82 (SD=1.3).

[89] The lowest response on the scale was five from a single respondent. All other responses were between 6-10 on the scale.

[90] This is based on a rating between 7-10 on a ten-point scale.

[91] Grey, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture with Spirit in Community," 136.

For the importance of sharing a testimony,[92] the data across all respondents indicated a mean of 6.56 (SD=2.0). The data was similar for pastors, with a mean of 6.65 (SD=2.1). While both these figures indicate importance, they are close to the neutral range. According to Land, for Pentecostals, the traditional purpose and function of sharing testimony was "to develop in the hearers the virtues, expectancy, attitudes, and experiences of those testifying.[93] Today, the significance of testimony is still an essential element in Pentecostal spirituality.[94] Ellington also highlights the sense of belonging to the community of believers as a feature of testimony.[95] However, the data suggests that only 54.4% (n=49) of all respondents indicate a degree of importance in sharing a testimony.[96] This figure is slightly lower for pastors at 52.2% (n=12). Also, it is worth noting that nearly a third, 32.2% (n=29), of all respondents, gave a neutral response between 5 and 6. For pastors, this figure is higher at 39.1% (n=9). These figures indicate that sharing a testimony is not necessarily an essential feature of spirituality.

2.3.4 Engaging the Old Testament

Genesis 1:28 and Isaiah 45:18 were utilised to assess whether participants could identify the main themes of a biblical passage. In question 29, participants responded to the open-ended question: "For preaching, what would you consider to be the main themes of

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[92] The same scale is used here as with the first part of question 27. See footnote 82 above.

[93] Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 78.

[94] Kenneth J. Archer, "Pentecostal Theology as Story: Participating in God's Mission," in *The Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology*, ed. Wolfgang Vondey (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2020), 42.

[95] Ellington, "Scripture: Finding One's Place in God's Story," 65. Ellington notes, "The story of the individual believer becomes part of the biblical story and the common practice among Pentecostals of offering public testimony to experience asserts and reinforces that connection." Ibid.

[96] This is based on responses rated between 6 to 10 on the ten-point scale.

Genesis 1:28?" Two biblical studies faculty members independently coded the comments into categories of similar themes. After all the coding had been completed, differences in coding between the two faculty members were identified, and a moderator was used to help categorise discrepancies. The coding revealed six significant[97] themes. See *Table 1.* below.

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[97] For the purpose of this discussion, this is taken to be any theme where n=10 or more. The remaining themes not classified into one of the six themes were: vocation (n=7); creation (n=5); God's command (n=3); Evangelism (n=3); God the creator (n=3); obedience (n=2); sovereignty of God (n=2); and other (n=2).

Theme	*% of respondents selecting a main theme*[98]
Stewardship[99]	47.2 (n=34)
Blessing[100]	47.2 (n=34)
Multiplication	33.3 (n=24)
Dominion	31.9 (n=23)
Creation Care[101]	26.4 (n=19)
Relationship	15.3 (n=11)

Table 1. Themes Identified from Genesis 1:28

To establish whether the themes noted by respondents were consistent with those of scholars, they were compared to a range of themes highlighted by modern commentators for Genesis 1:28 (see *Table 2.* below).[102]

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[98] Participants were permitted to select up to three themes.

[99] Any reference to the theme of humanity created in the divine image will be connected to the theme of stewardship, based on the *royal* responsibility bestowed on humanity as God's representatives on earth. The Polemical point in the ancient context is that God is not found in manufactured idols but rather in humanity. J. G. McConville, *God and Earthly Power: An Old Testament Political Theology, Genesis - Kings* (London ; New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 26, 36. Furthermore, according to Edward M. Curtis, "[I]t is humanity that stands in a special relationship to God, and that should function both like God and on His behalf; it does seem clear, in the light of the Near Eastern parallels, that the term has less to do with form and appearance than with function and position in the created order of things." Edward M. Curtis, "Image of God (OT)," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 391.

[100] Blessing is understood here in terms of benefit conveyed in the context of a positive relationship between God and humanity. Kent Harold Richards, "Bless/Blessing," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 752.

[101] While the theme of *creation care* may be synonymous with the theme of stewardship, I have chosen to include it as a distinct theme as stewardship does not necessarily indicate responsible stewardship of creation. Stewardship is often associated with what Celia Deane-Drummond describes as "an impersonal attitude to nature; it becomes 'resources' to be managed for human good." Celia Deane-Drummond, *The Ethics of Nature*, New dimensions to religious ethics (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), ix. So, while the exercise of stewardship, in general, is associated with the well-being or the future flourishing of humanity, it can also be understood by some as humanities right to the domination of the Earth, which is to be subdued for their purposes.

[102] The rationale for the commentaries selected for this task is based on popular texts. All commentaries cited are listed in *Best Commentaries: Reviews and Ratings of Biblical, Theological, and Practical Christian Works*, which has a scoring algorithm for each work. Some of the criteria for the scoring algorithm are based on an average rating from users and journals, the number of reviews and an internal modifier that gives more weight to credible academic sources that may not have had many reviews.

Theme	Commentators selecting the same theme as respondent
Stewardship	*Arnold, Brueggemann, Cassuto, Hartley, McKeown, Waltke, Walton, Wenham*
Blessing	*Arnold, Brueggemann, Cassuto, Hamilton. Hartley, Kidner, McKeown, Sailhamer, Sarna, Waltke, Walton, Wenham*
Multiplication	*Arnold, Cassuto, Hamilton, Hartley, Kidner, Sailhamer, Sarna, Waltke, Walton, Wenham*
Dominion	*Arnold, Brueggemann, Cassuto, Hamilton, Hartley, McKeown, Sarna, Waltke, Walton, Wenham*
Creation Care	*Brueggemann, Cassuto, Hartley, McKeown*
Relationship	*Arnold, Brueggemann, Kidner, McKeown, Sarna*

Table 2. Themes from Genesis 1:28 Identified by Respondent and Commentator

72.2% (n=52) of respondents for the central theme of Genesis 1:28 were consistent with the selected commentators on the book of Genesis. It is impossible to ascertain whether all the remaining responses directly correspond to the themes in *Table 1*. without further data, as many were brief or vague[103]. So, while the figure could be higher based on the classification of responses, it indicates that most responses regarding dominant themes are consistent with scholarship. If we take the first response only, this figure is significantly higher at 88.9% (n=64).

Although the ratings themselves are not an indicator of the value of individual work, the site helps note popular commentaries and their general credibility. John Dyer, "Commentaries on Genesis," *Best Commentaries: Reviews and Ratings of Biblical, Theological, and Practical Christian Works*, last modified 2020, accessed November 26, 2020, https://www.bestcommentaries.com/genesis/.

[103] Examples include "Creation" or "God's creation".

Following the same procedure for Isaiah 45:18 as with Genesis 1:28, the results to question 38, "For preaching, what would you consider to be the main themes of Isaiah 45:18?" can be seen in *Table 3.* below.

Theme	*% of respondents selecting a theme*
God the Creator	62.6 (n=42)
Purpose	25.4 (n=17)
Monotheism	22.4 (n=15)
Sovereignty of God	22.4 (n=15)

Table 3. Themes Identified from Isaiah 45:18

Theme	*Commentators selecting the same theme as respondent*
God the Creator	*Blenkinsopp, Brueggemann, Motyer, Oswalt, Smith, Westermann*
Purpose	*Blenkinsopp, Brueggemann, Childs, Goldingay, Motyer, Oswalt, Payne, Smith*
Monotheism	*Blenkinsopp, Goldingay, Payne, Westermann*
Sovereignty of God	*Blenkinsopp, Brueggemann, Childs, Goldingay, Payne, Motyer*
Relationship	*Blenkinsopp, Brueggemann, Goldingay, Payne, Watts*
Earth is Created for Habitation	*Blenkinsopp, Brueggemann, Childs, Motyer, Watts*
Order	*Oswalt, Brueggemann, Watts*

Table 4. Themes from Isaiah 45:18 Identified by Respondent and Commentator

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43.3% (n=99) of survey responses for the central themes of Isaiah 45:18 were consistent with selected commentators on the book of Isaiah. This figure is considerably lower than Genesis 1:28. If we take the first response only, this figure is significantly higher at 71.6% (n=48). Both figures for Genesis 1:28 and Is 45:18 are relatively high when one considers the responses are not based on exegetical work but rather constitute an initial response to the survey question.[104]

For question 30, participants indicated the resources they would utilise to preach a sermon from Genesis 1:28. The extent to which various resources are used can be seen in *Figure 12. - 15.* below. *Figure 12.* indicates the use of commentaries; *Figure 13.* indicates the use of academic journals; *Figure 14.* indicates the use of a Bible dictionary; finally, *Figure 15.* indicates the use of online sermons.

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[104] It is possible that the responses reflected some aspect of prior learning.
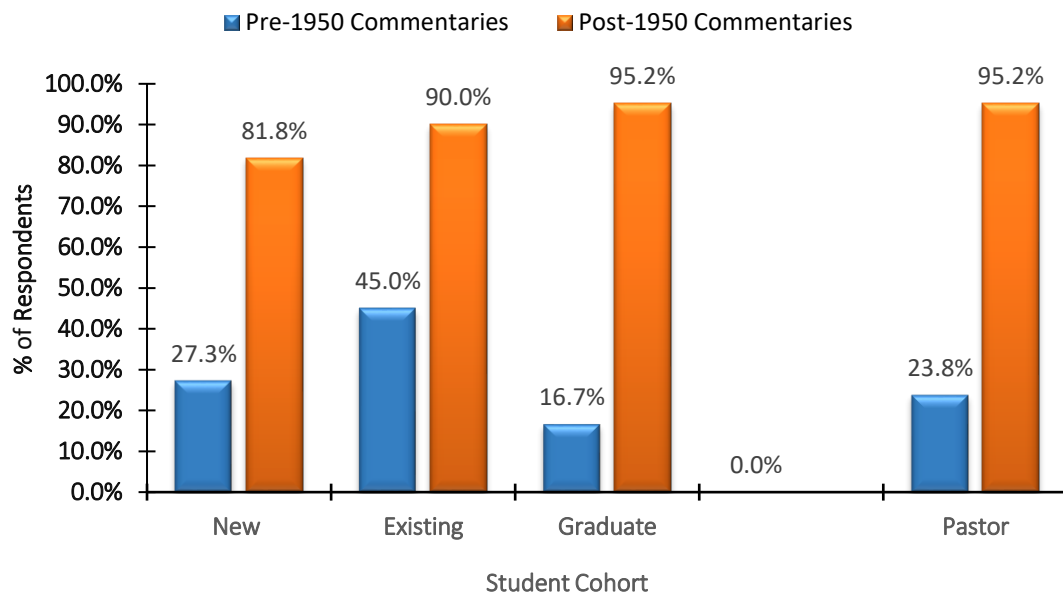
Figure 12. Resources Utilised: Commentaries

At AC, it is recommended that students have access to "good quality" commentaries.[105] Details of such commentaries and commentary series are typically provided through lectures and tutorials.[106] While, as Fee notes, "There really is no completely satisfactory one-volume commentary"[107], most summarise the historical context and briefly give the

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[105] According to Fee and Stuart, there are at least seven criteria in judging a "good quality" commentary. Each criterion help to answer the question, "Does this commentary help you understand what the biblical text actually said?" Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, Second Edition. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1993), 271. First, what type of commentary is it? Exegetical, homiletical, or a combination of both? The focus should be on an exegetical commentary as the purpose is to answer content questions. Second, asks the question is the commentary based on original biblical languages or an English translation? The use of a translation is not necessarily negative, provided the commentator employs the biblical language and engages with the text. The third point is considered to be the most important in deciding on the quality of a commentary. "When a text has more than one possible meaning, does the author discuss *all* the possible meanings, evaluate them, and give reasons for his or her own choice?"Ibid., 272. Fourth, does the author engage with text-critical problems? Fifth, does the author discuss and engage the historical background of the text at key points? Sixth, is a complete bibliography provided to allow you to do further study if necessary? Finally, seventh, does the introduction within the commentary provide sufficient detail of the historical context to allow

you to understand the occasion of the book? Ibid.

[106] Many of those recommended are consistent with Fee and Stuart.

[107] Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 270.

meaning of the text in terms of literary context.[108] Alongside the context questions, the purpose of referring to a commentary is to discover answers to content questions that have become apparent as a part of the study.[109] Students are encouraged to consult post-1950 commentaries due to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the study of which has impacted "modern" Bible commentaries.[110] This is due to variant readings in specific passages from the OT.[111]

It is encouraging to note the data in *Figure 12.* All students scored relatively low in utilising pre-1950 commentaries compared with post-1950 commentaries. It is also reassuring to note a steady increase in the use of the later commentaries from *New* students 81.8% (n=9) to *Existing* students 90.0% (n=18) to *Graduate* 95.2% (n=40). Furthermore, 95.2% (n=20) of the pastors in this cohort would also employ more contemporary commentaries.

Generally, *Figures 12.* indicates that students typically utilise contemporary commentaries for sermon preparation, which helps engage the three essential elements provided by commentary, first, assistance in discovering the historical context; second, assistance with the various content questions; third, possible meaning based on

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[108] Ibid.

[109] Ibid., 273.

[110] For the book of Genesis, commentaries such as Arnold, Spieser, and Longman reference the Dead Sea Scrolls, and for the book of Isaiah, Brueggemann, Goldingay, Oswalt, and Motyer all make mention of them.

[111] Not to mention the volume of literature found at the Qumran site. For examples of variant readings, see Timothy H Lim, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 48–54. Also see Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, Second Revised Edition. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001).

substantiated arguments for texts that are difficult to interpret. Each element suggests something other than the anti-intellect roots of the movement.
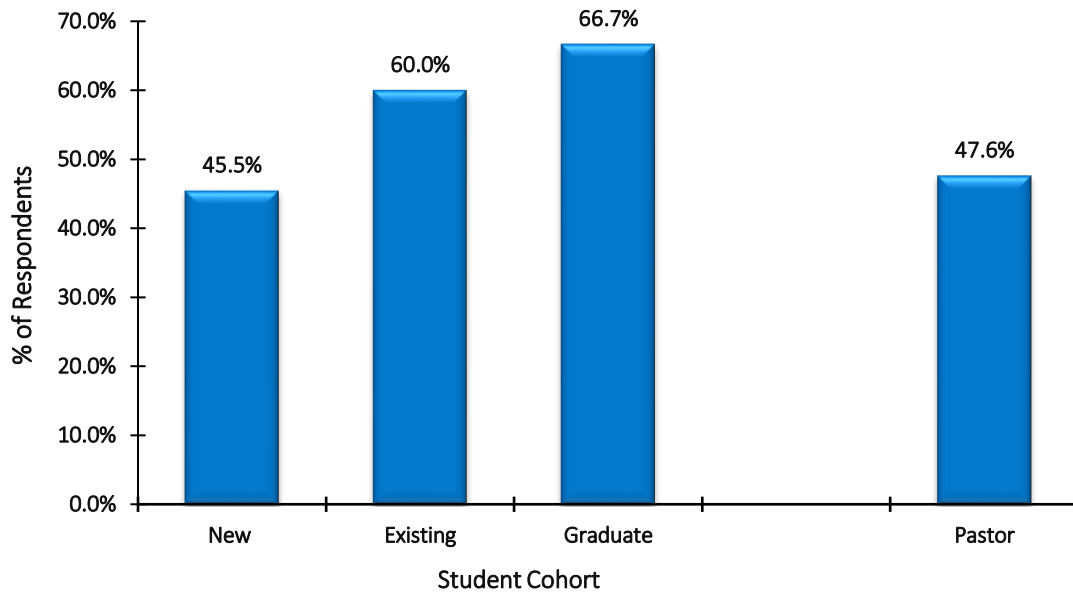
Figure 13. Resource Utilised: Academic Journals

Figure 13. indicates that an increasing number of students utilised academic journals in sermon preparation throughout their academic journey. There is a steady increase among *New*, *Existing* and *Graduate* from 45.5% (n=5), 60% (n=12), and 66.7% (n=28), respectively. However, it is interesting to note that only 47.6% (n=10) of pastors in the group considered consulting an academic journal for sermon preparation. The use of Bible dictionaries from *Figure 14.* shows a steady decrease, although marginal, across the cohorts, *New*, *Existing*, and *Graduate*, 81.8% (n=9), 80.0% (n=16), and 76.2 % (n=32), respectively. The figure for pastors is lower at 71.4% (n=15).
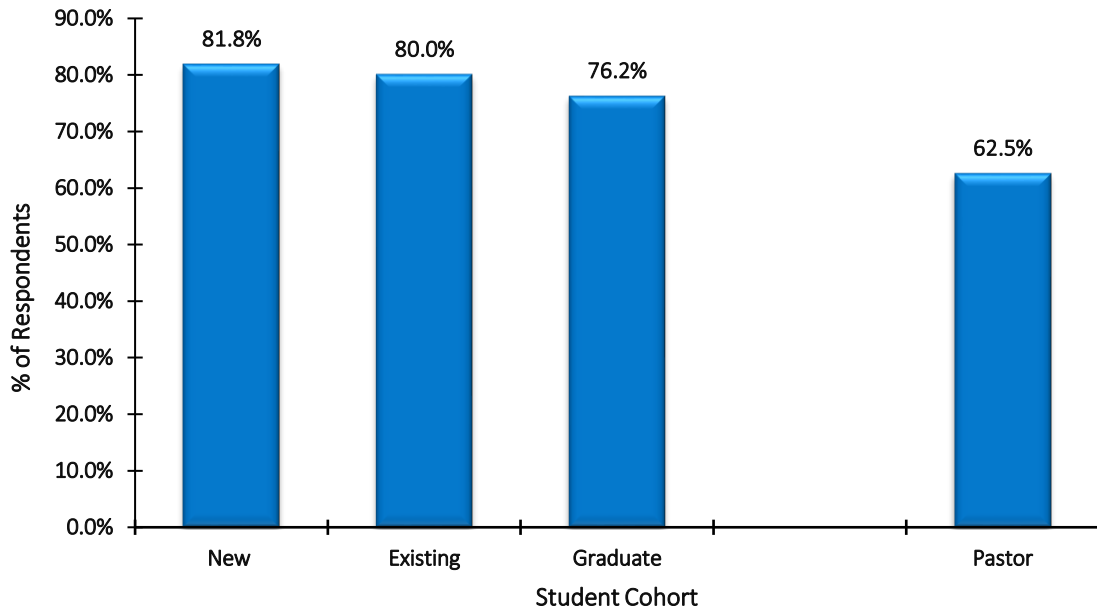
Figure 14. Resource Utilised: Bible Dictionary
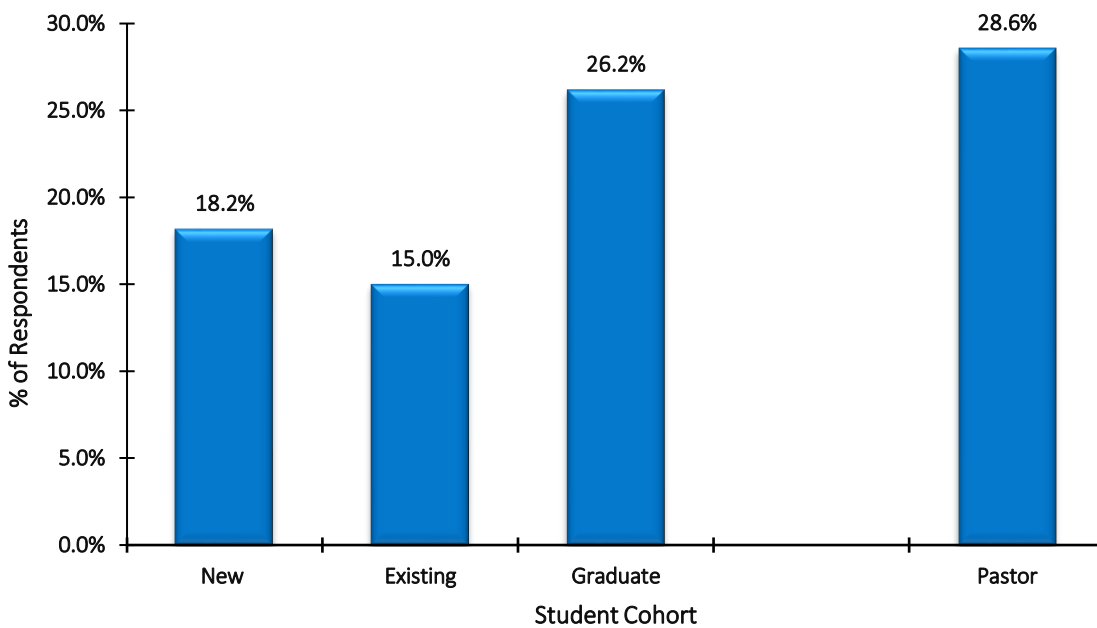
Figure 15. Resource Utilised: Online Sermons

Figure 15. indicates that a little over one-quarter of *Graduates*, 26.2% (n=11), and pastors, 28.6% (n=6), would employ online sermons in preaching preparation. The

figures for *New* and *Existing* students are relatively lower at 18.2% (n=2) and 15.0 % (n=3), respectively.

2.4 Summary

An original perception regarding the lack of alignment between an ecclesial or faith-oriented reading of the biblical text and an academic one informed the survey design. Having conducted the survey and analysed the findings, I suggest that what has emerged is not an ontological division between two fixed and bounded groups but rather a hermeneutical issue; a seeming tension between two stances, two motivations and two idealised outcomes.

On the one hand, you have what we might call the Pentecostal tradition. This tradition assumes the first stance, which encompasses a conviction based on an informed appreciation of the Bible framed around its truth claims derived from its divine origins. However, those of this first stance approach the text in such a way, to gain another insight from what we might refer here to as another, or second stance, based on a critical approach to the same source material, the Bible. This second stance we might refer to as the academy. Here there is an awareness of the logic or veracity of the additional insight that comes with approaching the biblical texts with academic rigour. For example, this is shown in the value of original context and appreciation of original languages.

It is precisely here that I suggest that the intended meaning of the title of this thesis becomes evident – perhaps a *good* interpretation of the Bible lies somewhere between conviction and

critique. If we think of ecclesial practice as adopting the 'conviction' side of the coin and the academy as adopting the 'critique' side, neither, in and of itself, a totalising and fulsome account of Pentecostal practice, then we can see the two sides as representations of the issues that are at stake. Accordingly, I suggest that once we begin to consider approaches to interpreting the Bible, that is, academic vs ecclesial practice, what becomes evident is the fundamental question, why do we interpret the biblical text the way we do? Thus, it is a matter of hermeneutics.

To summarise the survey, all respondents under analysis identified with the Pentecostal tradition regarding matters of faith, and a significant number, 91.7% (n=88), were directly involved in church-based ministry. Furthermore, 88.6% (n=85) of this group directly engaged and applied the Bible in their ecclesial setting, emphasising the importance of developing or nurturing a critical approach. While only two-thirds acknowledged that the reason for studying at AC was specifically to prepare for Church-based ministry, 91.7% (n=88) of all respondents acknowledged their motivation to study at AC was "To enhance the interpretation of the Bible." While the type of enhancement is not made explicit, it seems to suggest a desire to engage with critical methods. However, do those learned methods then translate in support of ecclesial practice in the way they should, or does some awareness on the part of others that the respondent preacher/teacher has engaged in critical biblical study function to reinforce the legitimacy of what is otherwise an interpretation of the Bible that lacks any evidence of critical methods?

The artefact under consideration for respondents was the Bible. As all respondents identified as adherents of the Pentecostal faith, its interpretation arises from a personal

conviction, as students from an academic critique. Hence, questions[112] in the survey sought to gauge an understanding of how that artefact was utilised in this in-between space. Therefore, it is surprising that the survey data indicated that less than 60% of respondents had read the entire OT. The results were similar across *Existing* students, *Graduate*, and pastors in the group. This figure seems relatively low for Pentecostals who associate reading the Bible with the Holy Spirit's experience. Indeed, given this association with and the significance of Spirit infusion, the responses to questions on the average time spent in sermon preparation which indicated a mean of eight and half hours, appear to indicate something different to what tradition suggests. Reading and interpreting is more than simply the Spirit or "better felt than telt [sic]." Instead, the survey data showed that the use of resources for sermon preparation is relatively high, with Bible commentaries (over 90% of respondents) and Bible dictionaries (approximately 80% of respondents) being the most frequently consulted resources. Academic journals are reasonably well represented (over 60% of respondents). When identifying the themes of selected OT verses, the stances of most respondents appeared consistent with scholarship. Most respondents also believed that understanding the ancient context in which the biblical texts were produced was necessary for interpretation. In contrast, only half of the respondents believed understanding ancient biblical languages was essential for interpretation.

Generally, the survey data aligns with Grey's comments regarding the selected texts for preaching. A lectionary is not used. Most respondents are "led by the Spirit" in their choice of texts or topics to discuss. Nearly all respondents emphasised the significance

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[112] For example, survey questions number 22, 23, 26, 27, 29, 32, 38, and 40.

of prayer before preaching or teaching from the Bible. For early Pentecostals, the application typically focused on the literal and plain message of the text. Grey notes, "The Bible was considered a book of truth and facts, which the community must only believe and apply"[113]. If we consider the tendency of Pentecostals towards a literalistic reading[114], only 20.9% (n=19) of respondents considered the literal meaning of a biblical passage to be the key to a contemporary application. The *sensus literalis* reading of Scripture does not define the overall group. According to Fee, "one does nothing more important in the formal training for Christian ministry than to wrestle with … the meaning and application of Scripture."[115] A task he describes as hermeneutics.[116]

A fundamental aspect of Christian ministry is an ongoing critical reflection of the biblical text to apply it to all areas of life.[117] Indeed, for those in a formal ministry setting, namely, pastors and preachers, a concern for that critical reflection should be far more significant than the average person of the Christian faith. As a reflection on the Bible undoubtedly influences a person's very thoughts on the Christian faith and impacts one's subsequent actions, it could be said that the acquisition of skills to reflect on the biblical text well and consistently are invaluable.[118] Many may think they are reflecting and interpreting for all intents and purposes; however, this may be based on an unexamined interpretive theological framework. If one studies the data from the survey, sound reflection on

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[113] Grey, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture with Spirit in Community," 129.

[114] Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 134.

[115] Gordon D. Fee, *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 24.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church Today," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 62, no. 2–3 (June 1996): 89.

[118] Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 270.

biblical texts indicated by the usage of commonly accepted skills or any acknowledged hermeneutical method may be a questionable assumption.

In fact, it would seem that some of the data from the survey results imply the presence of what Paul Ricœur referred to as a first naiveté. This "first naivete" is what Ricœur saw as a precritical, assumed acceptance of the Bible as 'truth'. This approach, if you will, interprets things as they first appear to be or at face value.[119] Indeed, the following results support this implication. Approximately half the respondents appreciated the importance of a basic understanding of ancient biblical languages to interpret the Old Testament well.[120] 25.3% (n=23) of respondents did not agree that referring to multiple modern translations when interpreting an Old Testament passage was useful.[121] 20.9% (n=19) of respondents agreed that the literal meaning of a biblical passage was the key to contemporary application. 41.8% (n=38) of respondents had not read the Old Testament.[122]

However, whether as a result of a greater consciousness and/or an awareness of one's situatedness or interpretive framework (e.g., "I identify as a Pentecostal."), it seems that students can move from Ricœur's notion of a first naiveté into what he refers to as the second naivete. This second naiveté is to be found on the other side of critical engagement. It is entered into by moving beyond the "face value" or uncritical approach to the text and employing a critical interpretation only to reprehend the text beyond this critical process.

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[119] John Barton, *The Nature of Biblical Criticism*, 1st ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 157.

[120] See *figure 9* and the associated data for the relevant part of question 26.

[121] See *figure 5* and the associated data for question 21.

[122] Only part of the text had been read. See Figure 7. on page 35, and the associated data for question 22.

Interestingly, for Ricœur, it is not the critical process of interpretation that is desirable but what lies beyond; we might say that this interpretation has been refined by academic rigour. As Ricœur says, "Beyond the desert of criticism, we wish to be called again".[123]

The data indicates some development and delay in moving between or beyond these stances of conviction and critique. It seems possible, even probable, that the move forward is informed by academic resources, emphasising an understanding of the ancient culture for interpretation, or believing the original contextual meaning to be essential to apply a text properly. By contrast, the delay may be indicated by the use of multiple Bible translations for personal devotion rather than academic study or the lack of appreciation for original biblical languages. According to Pollefeyt, a movement from the first through to the second naiveté occurs due to interpretive conflicts or "hermeneutical junctions".[124] "Hermeneutical junctions" arise when different opinions cannot readily be harmonised. Hermeneutics shows us that these interpretive conflicts are often related to the presuppositions undergirding our interpretations. These presuppositions are, in turn, related to and more or less dependent upon religious tradition (or any tradition for that matter) that we adhere to or adopt. Therefore, in order to shed light on the somewhat divergent interpretive practices (as indicated by the survey results) and the presuppositions across the Pentecostal community, it is necessary to explore the matter of hermeneutics and examine why we interpret the way that we do.

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[123] Paul Ricœur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, trans. Emerson Buchanan, 1st Beacon Paperback. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 59.

[124] Didier Pollefeyt, "Religious Education as Opening the Hermeneutical Space," *Journal of Religious Education* 68, no. 2 (July 2020): 120.

When we look at the discipline of hermeneutics, we will find that it tasks us with acknowledging our presuppositions or pre-conceptions and then navigating them. Accordingly, to understand why we interpret the biblical text in a certain way, we need to acknowledge our presuppositions or pre-conceptions, individually and collectively, as a community, in this instance, the Pentecostal community. They can be navigated only after acknowledging, perhaps even embracing, said presuppositions. Now there are two sets of pre-conceptions that we are dealing with here in this thesis. First, the pre-conceptions of the wider Pentecostal community (both academic and ecclesial), and second, my own pre-conceptions regarding the lack of alignment between an ecclesial or faith-oriented reading of the biblical text and an academic one. Thus, to situate the respective presuppositions, a necessary task in considering why Pentecostals interpret the biblical text as they tend to, it is imperative that both the discipline of hermeneutics itself and then the Pentecostal community at hand are examined. Accordingly, I shall now turn to an overview of hermeneutics, emphasising the early development of hermeneutics as a discipline and the tendency in contemporary hermeneutics to embrace presuppositions as unavoidable and multi-vocality as necessary and even desirable. Hopefully, we will then begin to see how our situatedness, or context, is key to biblical interpretation.

Chapter Three: Hermeneutics

3.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I suggested that the tension between two stances in Pentecostal interpretation and application of the biblical text, represented by ecclesial practice and the academy, highlighted a hermeneutical issue, one that gravitated between conviction and critique. I stated that once we begin to consider different approaches to or perspectives on Biblical interpretation amongst Pentecostals, that is, academic vs ecclesial practice, what becomes evident is the *why* question: why something is interpreted in this way and not that. This is the hermeneutical issue. Based on the insights of and the underlying hermeneutical issue highlighted by the survey data and analysis, the survey questions become a provocation that provides the rationale for this chapter. The chapter will explore the development of hermeneutics by engaging its key theorists through the lens of the issue exposed in the previous chapter, namely, the need to acknowledge and navigate one's individual and/or communal presuppositions.

When we consider hermeneutics as a discipline, it becomes evident that the challenges to an act of interpretation are probably more varied and multifaceted than one might assume upon initial investigation. Hermeneutics raises and attempts to answer questions regarding not only the nature and validity of interpretation and, therefore, understanding and meaning but also causes us to consider the existential and epistemological implications of interpretation. Furthermore, we are forced to consider questions of language, history, and tradition.

While biblical hermeneutics focuses on understanding, reading, applying, and ultimately responding to the biblical text[1], deriving meaning from it is a complex and often challenging task. William Klein et al. remark, "We may readily explain what the Bible says, *but* have more difficulty in agreeing about what it *means* by what it says."[2] Indeed, we may also have difficulty regarding agreement over precisely where that meaning resides. Further, it is prudent to note that the Bible does not *say* anything; it reads, and once read, it is the reader who says.

As this examination of hermeneutics is undertaken with an eye to why Pentecostals interpret the biblical text the way they do, perhaps an appropriate place to begin the hermeneutical discussion is with a passage from the Bible, specifically Acts 8:30-31. These verses are not employed to undertake exegesis. Instead, I suggest they sufficiently illustrate a theory of reading as well as the use of the biblical text for a particular agenda or, as suggested by some, propaganda.[3] At any rate, whether or not it offers a "paradigm of hermeneutic praxis"[4], it does serve to introduce some of the complexities of reading the biblical text. The passage reads as follows:

> Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked.

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[1] Anthony C. Thiselton, *Hermeneutics: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2009), 1.

[2] William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, Third edition. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2017) electronic edition. (emphasis added).

[3] R.P. Carroll, "The Reader and the Text," in *Text in Context: Essays by Members of the Society for Old Testament Study*, ed. Andrew D. H. Mayes (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3.

[4] Ibid.

"How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.[5] (Acts 8:30-31)

As R. P. Carroll remarks, "The question posed by Philip to the unnamed Ethiopian official remains one of the great paradigmatic questions about any act of reading: "Do you understand what you are reading?" "[6] While Joseph Fitzmyer notes that Philip's question is a leading one[7], it is equally challenging for anyone attempting to *understand* the biblical text (or any text). For Fitzmyer, the eunuch's response to Philip poses the classic problem concerning the interpretation of the biblical text.[8] Without a guide or interpreter, the text can often remain vague as its possible meaning is not always self-explanatory.[9]

For the story above, there appear to be no means for the Ethiopian reader to construct understanding without guidance, although Philip seems to be a reliable guide. As Wallace Stevens observed in the first lines of his poem *Phosphor Reading by His Own Light*:

It is difficult to read. The page is dark.
Yet he knows what it is that he expects…[10]

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[5] *The Holy Bible* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2005); *The Holy Bible: Today's New International Version* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006).

[6] Carroll, "The Reader and the Text," 3.

[7] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, ed., *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1st ed., AB v. 31 (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 413.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed. (Macon, Ga: Smyth & Helwys Pub, 2005), 77.

[10] Wallace Stevens, *The Collected Works of Wallace Stevens* (New York: Alred A. , 1971), 267.

For the Ethiopian, the text was difficult to read. The page was indeed dark. However, Philip knew what to expect since he already possessed a hermeneutic of reading gained through immersion within the community and the tradition of which he was a part. This hermeneutic would allow him to interpret the text through a particular lens.[11] Carroll notes:

> Here then is a paradigm for reading the Bible (or any text): text (scroll), reader, and interpreter constituted a triad. As a leading question, it allowed Philip, as a reader with a reading hermeneutic (or theory of reading), to read the text in accordance with his own prior hermeneutic. As a member of a reading community which had provided him with a hermeneutic for understanding such obscure texts, Philip was able to read the text to his own and the Ethiopian's satisfaction.[12]

We see a contextualised (or recontextualised, for the Ethiopian) reading of the text, employing a communal reading framework. As Philip exemplifies, one's reading and interpretation are informed by cultural, epistemological, and theological context. These, for example, are contexts in which meaning is created and supported. The sheer weight and significance of that context give credibility, even gravitas, to specific interpretations.

Typically, the biblical text challenges each new generation to read it, interpret it, and put it into practice.[13] One of the functions of reading or engaging with the text is application. While an application assumes an initial and conventional reading, how to apply it is no straightforward task, specifically within a context far removed from that of the original writing. Modern Christian readers would find it almost impossible to

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[11] Carroll, "The Reader and the Text," 3.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Pollefyt and Bieringer, "The Role of the Bible in Religious Education: Reconsidered: Risks and Challenges in Teaching the Bible," 134.

agree on how the various texts should be applied in contemporary contexts[14]. Some of

the challenges which become readily apparent are as follows:

> The Bible is God's Word, yet it has come to us through human means. The commands of God appear to be absolute, yet they are set in such diverse historical contexts that we are hard-pressed to see how they can be universally normative. The divine message must be clear, yet many passages seem all too ambiguous. We acknowledge the crucial role of the Holy Spirit, yet scholarship is surely necessary to understand what the Spirit has inspired.[15]

Some of the other challenges noted by Klein et al. relate to the vast gulf that separates

the biblical text from today's world.[16] Whether the gulf is understood historically,

chronologically, geographically, culturally, politically, socially, or morally, each

presents its challenges, and each contains its difficulties.[17] Of course, this is not an

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[14] I use the plural here as there are several contexts. See section 3.3 for a discussion around contemporary biblical hermeneutics.

[15] Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Examples given by Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard are adapted from Moisés Silva, *Has the Church Misread the Bible? The History of Interpretation in the Light of Current Issues*, Foundations of contemporary interpretation v. 1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Academie Books, 1987), 37–38. For the Catholic tradition, the Second Vatican Council states that "the books of both the Old and New Testaments in their entirety, with all their parts, are sacred and canonical because written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author and have been handed on as such to the Church herself… God chose men and while employed by Him they made use of their powers and abilities, so that with Him acting in them and through them, they, as true authors, consigned to writing everything and only those things which He wanted". Vatican Council, ed., *Solemnly Promulgated on November 18, 1965, by His Holiness Pope Paul VI: Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation Dei Verbum.* (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1966), 9. *Dei Verbum* affirms that God is the author but *inspires* human authorship in the process, it states, "God chose men and while employed by Him they made use of their powers and abilities, so that with Him acting in them and through them, they, as true authors, consigned to writing everything and only those things which He wanted". Ibid. Within the Australian Pentecostal tradition, the ACC states, "We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, namely the Old and New Testaments in their original writings. All scripture is given by inspiration of God…. The Bible does not simply contain the Word of God, but is, in reality, the complete revelation and very Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit…" Australian Christian Churches, "Who We Are," *Who We Are*, August 2021, accessed September 28, 2021, http://www.acc.org.au/about-us/.

[16] An example of a specific challenge relates to the numerous genres in which the text is conveyed. Each incorporates a complex literary landscape.

[17] Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Klein et al. go on to note, "Proper interpretation requires the interpreter's personal freedom, yet that freedom comes with considerable risks of bias and distortion. Is there some role for an external, corporate authority? The objectivity of the biblical message seems essential to some readers, yet on the one hand presuppositions surely inject a degree of subjectivity into the interpretive process, while on the other postmodernity calls the very concept of objectivity into question." Ibid.

exhaustive list of challenges, and any reader of the Bible can readily offer other challenges surrounding engagement with the text. A further problem, specifically a hermeneutical one, introduced in the previous chapter, emerges when we read a text that we have previously read and subsequently have a new or altered "understanding" of the text in the act of re-reading. Something has changed, whether we see something new in the text or read something differently.[18] This movement beyond a first naiveté, toward or into a second naiveté, gives rise to a new interpretation. What has changed? According to Werner Jeanrond, it is our perspective that has changed. He notes,

> It may not have changed radically, yet nonetheless, we now see the text differently. This experience teaches us that understanding is in fact not an automatic and unproblematic exercise of deciphering a set of consistently identical signs on paper…Rather, text-understanding always demands our active participation in recreating the text in question. It demands that we lend our reality to the text so that it can become real for us. Understanding then comes about when these two realities meet: the reality of the reader and the reality of the text.[19]

The above experience of *re-reading* a text and discovering something new illustrates the lack of objectivity and/or neutrality in the act of reading. We are reminded that we unknowingly or quite unconsciously read the text through a particular perspective. Unfortunately, our ability to recognise our perspective or even critique it is generally minimal, and as such, we need to consider and reflect upon *how* we have arrived at an understanding. When considering this, two questions arise, each demanding self-reflection. First, how much can we understand? Second, what influences or conditions our understanding? It is the reflection on these questions that establishes the realm of hermeneutics.

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[18] Werner G. Jeanrond, *Theological Hermeneutics: Development and Significance* (London: Macmillan Academic, 1991), xvi.

[19] Ibid., 1–2.

Before continuing the discussion on interpretation, it would be helpful to understand some elementary terms or distinctions that deal with the task of interpreting a literary text. Such an understanding is vital as the relatedness and the distinctive nature of the following terms are occasionally misunderstood. For biblical studies, the first element is the term 'exegesis', which literally means "to lead out."[20] A more comprehensive meaning is "to relate in detail" or "to expound".[21] Douglas Stuart describes exegesis as "the process of careful, analytical study of biblical passages undertaken in order to produce useful interpretations of those passages."[22] In essence, exegesis is the exercise of understanding and interpreting the text or, more formally, drawing out meaning *from* the text. This is predicated on the assumption that something is to be drawn out, such as meaning. Drawing out the meaning *from* the text becomes amplified when the particular text in question is understood (or presented) as sacred.[23]

For it to be deemed effective, exegesis is required to be a meticulous exercise and, thus, necessitates a method to give it rigour. This brings us to the second element, the exegetical method, better understood as an extrapolation from the first term rather than an additional one. According to Schökel, the exegetical method is "the way of

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[20] William P. Brown, *A Handbook to Old Testament Exegesis*, ebook. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2017). Derived from the Greek verb *exēgeisthai.* Ibid.

[21] John H Hayes and Carl R Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 1.

[22] Douglas Stuart, "Exegesis," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary: D-G* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 682.

[23] The prior assumption is here significant, for the "Bible" is already assumed or advised to be a text that carries meaning. Imagine, if this were possible for a moment, that one had no knowledge of the Bible's origins or perceived significance and read it only as "story", what then becomes of creation stories, of miracles, of war?

proceeding systematically in the interpretation of a text."[24] This will be further explored in what follows.

For many writers since the time of the Church Fathers and from the Reformation to the early nineteenth century, interpretation of the biblical text was virtually synonymous with exegesis.[25] As noted above, exegesis is an approach to the text that *draws out* its meaning. There is a need and a concomitant desire to understand and communicate what the words on the page mean. However, we must be careful not to assume that exegesis is interchangeable with hermeneutics. Although they are related, they are different. Exegesis is an acquired and *applied* skill, unlike hermeneutics which functions more philosophically.[26] For exegesis, we are concerned with various elements that affect the text, such as the author's cultural, social, or historical context. There are other significant factors to consider here, such as skills in grammar and syntax, even in ancient languages that inform this practice, and knowledge of a wider albeit similar body of material that guides reading and meaning. Once much of this is known, we may feel we have sufficient information relating to the text to understand or explain it.[27] However, we must recognise that all we have done is to analyse a literary text, albeit in a methodical, organised, and systematic way.

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[24] Luis Alonso Schökel and José María Bravo, *A Manual of Hermeneutics*, trans. Liliana M. Rosa, The Biblical Seminar no. 54 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 13.

[25] Thiselton, *Hermeneutics: An Introduction*, 1.

[26] Ernst M. Conradie, "What on Earth Is an Ecological Hermeneutics? Some Broad Parameters," in *Ecological Hermeneutics: Biblical, Historical and Theological Perspectives.*, ed. David G Horrell et al. (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010), 298.

[27] Alonso Schökel and Bravo, *A Manual of Hermeneutics*, 15.

The exegetical process should not be identified as hermeneutics,[28] although it may form part of one's hermeneutical method. Hermeneutics as a discipline, however, should properly be understood as the theory of interpretation.[29] Schökel and Bravo describe this as "the theory of comprehension and textual interpretation."[30] As noted above, textual understanding requires active conscious participation.[31] According to Schökel and Bravo, by reflecting on existential philosophy and human communication, the ability of a text to *stir* the reader with its message can be emphasised. Once 'stirred', the reader has the compulsion to interpret the text existentially and, in some sense, *wants* to know what the text is telling them through personal actualisation. It must be noted that this *actualised comprehension* of the text is a type of exegesis and should not be confused with hermeneutical interpretation.[32]

Exegesis, albeit "volatile and complex",[33] is an explanation or at least an attempt at such.[34] Much like hermeneutics, it is a science because it necessitates or requires specific tools or practices to be engaged in the analytical process, and also an art because it involves the reader's imagination and creativity.[35] Although it can be described as a

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[28] Ibid.

[29] Jeanrond, *Theological Hermeneutics: Development and Significance*, 2.

[30] Alonso Schökel and Bravo, *A Manual of Hermeneutics*, 15.

[31] Jeanrond, *Theological Hermeneutics: Development and Significance*, 2.

[32] Alonso Schökel and Bravo, *A Manual of Hermeneutics*, 15.

[33] Brown, *A Handbook to Old Testament Exegesis*, ebook. This is a rather dynamic description of exegesis in the contemporary world of biblical interpretation. Brown goes on to describe it as "the shift away from apologetics toward a more open-ended and dialogical approach to Scripture, a move away from defending the Bible to bringing the Bible into an honest conversation". Ibid.

[34] Alonso Schökel and Bravo, *A Manual of Hermeneutics*, 15.

[35] Brown, *A Handbook to Old Testament Exegesis*, ebook.

science and an art, exegesis is not an alternative to hermeneutics. As Schökel and Bravo note,

> Exegesis is the explanation of a text according to its original meaning — historical-critical work. Existentialist exegesis is the explanation of the text according to the meaning it has for readers. They are two ways of carrying out exegesis, of explaining the text.[36]

Another area often confused with hermeneutics is the second element described above; the exegetical method. Many interpretative strategies are present when considering methodology or method(s). Whether it is specific techniques involving literary and historical analysis, such as form or source criticism, the method suggests a *precise* way of proceeding, which is systematic and, importantly, controlled.[37] When we utilise these various methods, we are not looking at the theory of interpretation but rather how interpretation is carried out, in the contemporary context, typically as per the designs and parameters of a specified and well-defined method. When the biblical text is read, we may ask ourselves, "What must I do?" or "how can I live out the message of the text here and now?"[38] When we consider the earlier analysis of Pentecostalism, as noted in the introduction, an example of a significant biblical text that relates to the tradition and asks such questions is found in Joel 2:23. From the outset, Pentecostals have interpreted the "early rain" or "autumn rain" from Joel 2:23 as the miraculous events on the day of

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[36] Alonso Schökel and Bravo, *A Manual of Hermeneutics*, 15–16.

[37] John Riches, "Methodology," ed. R. J. Coggins and J. L. Houlden, *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (London: SCM Press, 1994), 449. Even using a word such as 'method' does immediately suggest some sort of similarity with scientific methods relating to precision and the various degrees to which this can be achieved. It must be noted that the results of textual studies, for example, may provide hard empirical data, but simply using this work as a basis on which all subsequent work is built can be highly misleading. Ibid., 449–451.

[38] However, it must be noted that the question of "here and now" does not automatically lend itself to all forms of method, i.e., source or form criticism are elements of a broader historical criticism that are ultimately and primarily concerned with the specific form of the literary artefact, its creation, and the context of that creation. Contemporary meaning and relevance are very much second order questions, if they are considered relevant at all.

Pentecost and described in Acts 2:17-21.[39] According to Amos Yong, "If the original day of Pentecost was foretold by Joel, it was only the "early rain" awaiting the abundant showers of a "latter rain" [or spring rain]"[40]. The subsequent "latter rain" or "spring rain" is understood as the modern outpouring of God's Spirit that began during the early Pentecostal revivals, understood to fulfil this prophecy, stressing the last days and imminent return of Christ.[41] Kenneth Archer notes, "[T]he Latter Rain motif enabled Pentecostals to relate and interpret the Old and New Testament according to a promise-fulfilment-strategy. The promise fulfilment strategy also allowed them to extend the promise into their present community, thus continuing to participate in the past promises presently."[42] The Pentecostal community not only seeks to reform the present but also looks to the future.[43] Based on the conviction that it stands under the "latter rain", the community believes, that God ordains them. This belief helps them respond to the questions, "What must I do?" or "how can I live out the message of the text, here and now?" According to Kärkkäinen,

> …in the "last days" (Acts 2:17) to be Christlike witnesses in the power of the Spirit. The hope in the imminent coming of the Lord has energized pentecostal churches and movements in their worldwide missionary enthusiasm and activity. Pentecostals have consistently taught that the church must be ready for the coming of the Lord by means of faithful witness and holy living.[44]

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[39] Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, 83. Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture.* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 254. Kenneth J. Archer, "Pentecostal Hermeneutics: Retrospect and Prospect," in *Pentecostal Hermeneutics: A Reader*, ed. Lee Roy Martin (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 132.

[40] Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, 83.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century: Spirit Scripture and Community*, 100.

[43] Frederick Dale Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit: the pentecostal experience and the New Testament Witness* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1970), 28.

[44] Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, "Pentecostal Mission and Encounter with Religions," in *The Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism*, ed. Cecil M. Robeck Jr. and Amos Yong (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 295. Also see John Michael Penney, *The Missionary Emphasis of Lukan Pneumatology*, Journal of Pentecostal theology Supplement series 12 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

Within these texts, we find the centrality of missions for Pentecostalism. The eschatological fervour and the role of the Holy Spirit are integral[45] in answering the questions "What must I do?" or "how can I live out the message of the text, here and now?"

While this type of interpretation, that of asking relevant and appropriate questions, is undoubtedly valuable and useful, it remains doggedly anchored in and controlled by the realm of the exegetical method. It does not consider the act or theory of understanding and interpreting the text; hence, it does not seem synonymous with hermeneutics.[46]

Hermeneutical reflection aims to improve the act of reading a text or perhaps the act of looking at a work of art by considering the nature of human understanding, its possibilities, and its limitations.[47] With these considerations in mind and out of a practical need to *understand* and *interpret* the Bible, Friedrich Schleiermacher was the first notable figure to advance a philosophical theory of understanding[48] that other thinkers later developed. Wilhelm Dilthey, Martin Heidegger, Hans Georg Gadamer, and Ricœur are amongst the most significant. Throughout this development in what became known as

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Also see J. M. Penney, *The Missionary Emphasis of Lukan Pneumatology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

[45] Kärkkäinen, "Pentecostal Mission and Encounter with Religions," 295.

[46] Alonso Schökel and Bravo, *A Manual of Hermeneutics*, 16.

[47] Jeanrond, *Theological Hermeneutics: Development and Significance*, 2–3.

[48] See Ibid., 44–77.

the field of hermeneutics, attention shifted from the interpretation of the text to the

nature of human understanding.[49]

Based on the survey data in the previous chapter, an overwhelming majority of

respondents acknowledged that their motivation to study a specific course in biblical

[170] Garrett Green, *Theology, Hermeneutics, and Imagination: The Crisis of Interpretation at the End of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 4. Some of the notable works of each philosopher is cited in what follows. Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics: The Handwritten Manuscripts*, ed. Heinz Kimmerle, trans. Jack Forstman and James Duke (Missoula, Mont: Published by Scholars Press for the American Academy of Religion, 1977); Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, ed. Andrew Bowie, trans. Andrew Bowie, Cambridge texts in the history of philosophy (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1998). An essay written by Dilthey in 1900 "The Rise of Hermeneutics" employs hermeneutics to make a link between philosophy and history. See Wilhelm Dilthey, *Hermeneutics and the Study of History*, ed. Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi, trans. Rudolf A. Makkreel and Fredric R. Jameson (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1996), 235–260. He concludes the main purpose of hermeneutics is, "to preserve the universal validity of historical interpretation against the inroads of romantic caprice and sceptical subjectivity…Seen in relation to epistemology, logic, and the methodology of the human sciences, the theory of interpretation becomes an important connecting link between philosophy and the historical sciences, an essential component in the foundation of the human sciences". Ibid., 250. For a significant work in 1910 see Wilhelm Dilthey, *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences*, ed. Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi, vol. 3, Selected Works (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2002)... Here Dilthey considers productivity (*Wirkung*) in terms of the individual and productive systems that are at work in history. These productive systems are a result of the individual's need to communicate and interact with others. Dilthey's category of *Wirkung* is the essence of Gadamer's *Wirkungsgeschichte* (theory of effective history). Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein Und Zeit*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996). Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, trans. David E. Linge (Berkley, California: University of California Press, 1976); Hans-Georg Gadamer, Joel Weinsheimer, and Donald G. Marshall, *Truth and Method*, 2nd revised. (London ; New York: Continuum, 2004). Paul Ricœur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Denis Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970); Paul Ricœur, *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*, ed. Don Ihde (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2010); Paul Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-Disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*, ed. Robert Czerny (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984); Paul Ricœur, *From Text to Action*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and John B. Thompson, New edition. (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2007); Paul Ricœur, *From Text to Action*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and John B. Thompson, 2 (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1991); Paul Ricœur and Lewis Seymour Mudge, *Essays on Biblical Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980). Ricœur's hermeneutical shift can be seen in *Freud and Philosophy*. Prior to its publication Ricœur had *used* hermeneutics; subsequently, he became more interested in interpretation, understanding, and the theory of hermeneutics. His major works of the 1970s and 1980s engage with key concepts within hermeneutics in an effort to relate them to philosophy more broadly. Robert Piercey, "Paul Ricœur," in *The Blackwell Companion to Hermeneutics*, ed. Niall Keane and Chris Lawn (Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley, 2016), 413. For a historical overview of the intellectual development, see Lawrence K. Schmidt, *Understanding Hermeneutics* (Durham. U.K.: Acumen, 2006); Jeanrond, *Theological Hermeneutics: Development and Significance*; Richard E. Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2000).

studies was to gain knowledge and enhance their interpretation of the Bible.[50]

Interpreting here might be said to refer to articulating and *unpacking* what is understood.

It seems that additional knowledge and insight ultimately lead to better understanding.[51]

It is this "better understanding" that the survey respondents appear to be seeking.

For Schleiermacher, understanding is something inextricably linked with speaking and language; it is a linguistic act. For him, the interpretive process of reading a text is never complete.[52] In reading a text, he asserts that we must "understand the utterance at the first just as well and then better than its author"[53]. In this way, understanding is an interpretation that *better* communicates the original text ("what the author has already said"). Gadamer nuances this notion of better understanding and asserts,

> Understanding is not, in fact, understanding better, either in the sense of superior knowledge of the subject because of clearer ideas or in the sense of fundamental superiority of conscious over unconscious production. It is enough to say that we understand in *a different way, if we understand at all.*[54]

For Gadamer, understanding (and interpretation) always takes place from within a particular "horizon" (*Horizont*), which Gadamer describes as "the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point."[55]

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[50] 91.7% (n=88) indicated it was "To enhance the interpretation of the Bible", and 96.9% (n=93) indicated it was "To gain knowledge". For more on this, see responses to question 18 in the previous chapter.

[51] V. G. Shillington, *Reading the Sacred Text: An Introduction to Biblical Studies* (London ; New York: T & T Clark, 2002), 42.

[52] Donatella Di Cesare, "Understanding," in *The Blackwell Companion to Hermeneutics*, ed. Niall Keane and Chris Lawn (Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley, 2016), 230.

[53] Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, 23.

[54] Gadamer, Weinsheimer, and Marshall, *Truth and Method*, 296.

[55] Ibid., 301. Gadamer goes on to write, "[a]pplying this to the thinking mind, we speak of the narrowness of horizon, of the possible expansion of horizon, of the opening up of new horizons". Ibid. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, 2nd revised. (London ; New York: Continuum, 2004), 301.

This study's range of vision is Australian and focuses on Pentecostalism, further explored in the subsequent chapter. Whichever vantage point we possess, we must acknowledge that it sets the limits to the concept of "horizon". As one's vantage point changes, understanding is also and necessarily reconstructed. To understand a particular text, the interpreter expands their horizon to include the projected horizon of the past.[56] Gadamer states, "the horizon of the present cannot be formed without the past. There is no more an isolated horizon of the present in itself than there are historical horizons that have to be acquired; understanding is always the fusion of these horizons."[57]

Gadamer recognises that the limit of all knowledge is bound by its historical situation and "the possibility of seeing the past from our historical perspective"[58], a possibility that Gadamer calls a "fusion of horizons" (*Horizontverschmelzung*).[59] Thus, for Gadamer, understanding occurs within a hermeneutic circle and via this "fusion of horizons"; between the text and the interpreter's initial position. The process is an ongoing creative interplay between horizons,[60] "where the interpreter's horizon is expanded to include the projected horizon of the past."[61] As every horizon is essentially unable to stand by itself and cannot be formed apart from history, when Gadamer refers to this "fusion of horizons", he is not referring to the merging of two different horizons

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[56] Schmidt, *Understanding Hermeneutics*, 106.

[57] Gadamer, Weinsheimer, and Marshall, *Truth and Method*, 305.

[58] Ibid. Hans-Georg Gadamer and Riccardo Dottori, *A Century of Philosophy: A Conversation with Riccardo Dottori*, trans. Rodney R. Coltman and Sigrid Koepke (New York: Continuum, 2003), 29.

[59] Gadamer and Dottori, *A Century of Philosophy: A Conversation with Riccardo Dottori*, 29.

[60] J. C. Robinson, "Gadamer, Hans-Georg (1900–2002)," ed. Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 123.

[61] Schmidt, *Understanding Hermeneutics*, 104.

or what Jerome Veith describes as "[A] confluence that would assimilate one side to the sameness of the other."[62] Instead, for Gadamer, *understanding is always the fusion of these horizons supposedly existing by themselves.*"[63] Gadamer does not offer rules for interpretation but rather a description of the hermeneutical experience, what J.C. Robinson describes as a "dialogical 'play' between the past and present, text and interpreter, that is, not reducible to technique but expressive of an ongoing process with no final completion."[64] The fusion is more than a passive meeting of two horizons, but rather an encounter whereby the interpreter's prejudices are challenged by an "other", forcing dialogue in which one's presuppositions and the *other's* opinions are called into question.[65] Although the horizons may be different, they can be fused, requiring dialogue to occur. This is the crucial insight of Gadamer. A common tendency is to see a controlled and closed reading in a text that one wants to find. For example, the many "Quests for the Historical Jesus" comes to mind. However, Gadamer's articulation of the fusion is that in "fusing", there is an engagement, a dialogue; the question his hermeneutical approach asks is the degree to which one is willing to admit to this. The encounter or exchange of ideas does not leave us unchanged; hence, understanding results in some form of transformation.[66] Gadamer writes, "To reach an understanding in dialogue is not merely a matter of putting oneself forward and successfully asserting

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[62] Jerome Veith, *Gadamer and the Transmission of History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), 23.

[63] Gadamer, Weinsheimer, and Marshall, *Truth and Method*, 305.

[64] Robinson, "Gadamer, Hans-Georg (1900–2002)," 123.

[65] George H. Taylor and Francis J. Mootz III, "Introduction," in *Gadamer and Ricœur: Critical Horizons for Contemporary Hermeneutics*, ed. George H. Taylor and Francis J. Mootz III (London ; New York: Continuum, 2011), 4.

[66] Christina Bieber Lake, "'The Knowledge That One Does Not Know': Gadamer, Levertov, and the Hermeneutics of the Question," in *Hermeneutics at the Crossroads*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, James K. A. Smith, and Bruce Ellis Benson, Indiana series in the philosophy of religion (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 85.

one's point of view, but being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were."[67]

3.2 Mind(ing) the Gap

One must always be aware that a *complete* interpretation of the biblical text is beyond reach. As Brown notes, "it will always be more than what we think we know about it."[68] When we engage in an activity of interpretation, we recognise a distance between us and the text.[69] By necessity, we attempt to span the distance and somehow adapt ourselves as readers of the text. As already stated, a historical, geographical, and cultural distance exists between the contemporary reader and the ancient writers. Whilst the gap may in parts have a respected tradition of interpretation, occasionally, it is specious.[70] Didier Pollefeyt and Reimund Bieringer consider these challenges, particularly in teaching the Bible. They note, "According to some exegetes, it is becoming an ever-greater problem for Christianity as …more time passes between the original setting of the Bible and later readers, the more the historical conditions and limitations of the Bible render it incomprehensible."[71]   The survey in the previous chapter alluded to the perceived

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[67] Gadamer, Weinsheimer, and Marshall, *Truth and Method*, 371.

[68] Brown, *A Handbook to Old Testament Exegesis*, ebook.

[69] See Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 53–58.

[70] Brown, *A Handbook to Old Testament Exegesis*, ebook.

[71] Pollefyt and Bieringer, "The Role of the Bible in Religious Education: Reconsidered: Risks and Challenges in Teaching the Bible," 122. Whoever assumes that the biblical text is a thorough and almost exclusively historical text is left to assume that once nothing of the original historical situation remains, communication with the text will no longer be possible. Is it possible that such a degree of historical discontinuity could bring all communication to an end? Can the biblical text be reduced solely to its historical dimension? Ibid.

importance of understanding the original setting of the Bible as a necessary step for interpretation.

One of the most noticeable gaps relates to the use of original languages of the biblical text simply because they are *foreign* to us and need to be studied and learned. From the survey, only half of the respondents believed understanding ancient biblical languages was important for interpretation; the remainder were unsure or did not believe it necessary. For Schleiermacher, hermeneutics "depends on the talent for language".[72] It is the art of understanding what the author means by the words they use. Each word has a pool of meanings, and words have meaning relative to other words. Ferdinand de Saussure pursues this discussion around the notion of *value (valeur).*[73] For de Saussure, the *valeur* of any word generally relates to "its property of standing for an idea."[74] The value of a word is defined by considering all immediate words. Although de Saussure insists on the distinction between the meaning of a word and the value of a word, he does not elaborate on the intricate interrelationship between the two, other than to point out that value is an element of meaning.[75]

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[72] Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, 11.

[73] See 111-122 in Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, ed. Perry Meisel and Haun Saussy, trans. Wade Baskin (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011). de Saussure states that, "all words used to express related ideas limit each other reciprocally… [Words] have value only through their opposition…. Conversely, some words are enriched through contact with others." Ibid., 116.

[74] Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, 114.

[75] Ibid., 114–117.

Similarly, Schleiermacher notes, "Language is infinite because each element is determinable in a particular manner via the rest of the elements".[76] For de Saussure, the value of words is not fixed. He remarks, "If words stood for pre-existing concepts, they would all have exact equivalents in meaning from one language to the next; but this is not true."[77] This highlights the difficulty when translating between languages, particularly when a word has a distinct meaning in one language, while in another, it can have multiple and possibly alternative meanings, and multiple values.

As noted in the previous chapter, Grey's recent work on the Australian Pentecostal community and their reading approaches gives some insight into the tendency of Pentecostal readings to show very little interest in the text's original language.[78] She particularly notes the lack of awareness or concern of Pentecostal interpreters concerning "textual issues, translations from original languages or even comparison of English translations."[79] However, most respondents in the current survey indicate the importance of utilising multiple modern Bible translations[80], which seems to indicate an awareness of textual issues.

To practice hermeneutics, one must recognise the importance of language and expressions to understand the author correctly.[81] Schleiermacher states, "Every utterance

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[76] Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, 11.

[77] Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, 116.

[78] Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 104.

[79] Ibid., 142.

[80] See data and analysis from question 21 in the previous chapter.

[81] Schmidt, *Understanding Hermeneutics*, 11.

has a dual relationship to the totality of language and to the whole thought of its originator".[82] Dilthey also recognises the importance of language in hermeneutics. He remarks, "it is only in language that the life of mind and spirit finds its complete and exhaustive expression – one that makes objective comprehension possible – exegesis culminates in the interpretation of the written records of human existence. … The science of this art is hermeneutics."[83] For Gadamer, the fusion of horizons in the process of understanding is undertaken via "the achievement of language."[84] So on a fundamental level, the interpreter must understand language as it was utilised and possibly understood at the point when the text was originally written.

In an effort to close the hermeneutical gap[85], not only is language significant and the need to know the language the author used equally so, but one also needs to understand the psychological world of the author as well as the other elements on which that frame is dependent, such as cultural, historical, social, and religious. The grammatical and psychological are interconnected parts; therefore, the cultural[86] gap also necessitates considering how the author thinks about a specific cultural and historical setting.[87] Understanding geography is also essential to reduce the gap, as biblical texts have many references to places such as towns, rivers, mountains, and plains. There are also

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[82] Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, 8.

[83] Dilthey, *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences*, 3:237–238.

[84] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 370.

[85] While it is recognised that for some, closing the hermeneutical gap may not be desirable or thought to be necessary, detailed engagement with these views is outside the scope of this paper.

[86] Here, we are looking at the anthropological sense. "A knowledge of marriage customs, economic practices, military systems, legal systems, agricultural methods, etc., is all very helpful in the interpretation." Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999), 5.

[87] Schmidt, *Understanding Hermeneutics*, 14.

elements, such as the diversity of literary genres, that must be appreciated; as Bernard Ramm notes,

> Expositors have, do, and will differ over what kind of literary genre any particular book or passage of Holy Scripture exhibits… The genre of a passage or book of Holy Scripture sets the mood or the stance from which all the rest of the book is seen…Our stance about the literary genre of the book determines our entire interpretation.[88]

It seems that much must be considered to bridge the gap between the ancient text and the contemporary reader. Despite attempts to build bridges and in an effort to straddle the chasm between reader, writer, and the text, we cannot entirely comprehend how the original audience received the biblical text and what it *spoke* to them any more than we can construct a time machine and journey back in time and space to interrogate the various authors or listeners.[89] However, we continue to "peer across the hermeneutical divide… [Hoping to] catch a glimpse of what the ancient text *could* have meant… But we can never overcome the hermeneutical divide; the full meaning of the ancient text remains ever-elusive"[90] , much like our efforts to construct a time machine.[91]

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[88] Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, 144–145.

[89] Brown, *A Handbook to Old Testament Exegesis*.

[90] Ibid. Emphasis added. Here care must be taken around what a "full meaning" might be intended or understood as. Browns use of "full meaning" is not taken to suggest an objective goal that we can somehow journey towards. Whereby, each activity of reading and interpreting is considered an incremental and progressive step in that journey. This would allude to a logical prior assumption that meaning itself can be final. "Full meaning" here is understood as the meaning intended by the original author. The question must also exist as to whether the (original) meaning of that text is even relevant or desirable?

[91] Although researchers have revealed "the possibility that an electron in space might 'spontaneously localise in the recent past'", in reality, we are no closer to building a time machine and travelling back in time. Samantha Page, "Cosmos," *Researchers Send Qubit Back in Time*, March 15, 2019, accessed October 22, 2021, https://cosmosmagazine.com/science/physics/researchers-send-qubit-back-in-time/.

Now, there is more to hermeneutics than merely establishing what the text *might* have said to the original audience and in a specific ancient context. If that were the only pursuit of hermeneutics, then biblical interpretation would strictly be a historical exercise[92] or what Brown describes as "an antiquarian quest."[93] Indeed, for many readers, the Bible is much more than a relic from the ancient past or simply an artefact to be dated and shelved in an easily reducible category; it is profoundly significant, in many ways, beyond the human author's original intent. Pollefyt and Bieringer also remind us that,

> Exclusive reliance on attempts to bridge the historical gap between then and now seriously limits our approach to the Bible. The Bible is more than a history book. Instead, it is the historical and literary deposit of the faithful witness of the early Christian and pre-Christian communities. The Bible does not wait for us to bridge the historical gap but contains a force that enables it to reach out to people.[94]

For communities of faith, the Bible is considered *God's word*. According to this pre-conception, the biblical text is authoritative and transformative, and "it has *eternal relevance;* it speaks to all humankind, in every age and every culture."[95] Furthermore, because the Bible is preconceived to be God's word, such status affords a particular ongoing significance to the text; thus, it is considered that what the text might mean for readers today is as significant, if not more, than what it may have meant in the past.[96]

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[92] Brown, *A Handbook to Old Testament Exegesis*.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Pollefyt and Bieringer, "The Role of the Bible in Religious Education: Reconsidered: Risks and Challenges in Teaching the Bible," 124.

[95] Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 118.

[96] Brown, *A Handbook to Old Testament Exegesis*, ebook.

We must also consider that the text does not arrive on the interpreter's desk in the purest form but rather is filtered and coloured by its own journey of engagement and interpretation as well as the values, judgements and expectations that various readers (individual and collective) have brought to that artefact.[97] The fact that the Bible is not a singular book but a composition of numerous documents ranging in genre, however, presented as a singular book, is the clearest example of it being a product of certain judgements and intentions. Thus, judging what the text means must both include and be conscious of the text's specific history and one's own experiences and expectations.

The idea of different or assumed postures toward the biblical text is significant. It speaks directly to one of the key issues being explored in this thesis, namely, the place of presuppositions or pre-conceptions in interpretation. If we propose one group as the ecclesial, or more specifically, in this case, the Pentecostal community, we see a predominant concern with the presentism of the biblical text and how it speaks to the present (and future) context. On the other hand, the academic group is perceived to be predominantly concerned with historical and critical assessment, a task that is perceived to run counter to the motivations and requirements of the Pentecostal community. Of course, these are perceptions or better pre-conceptions of the respective domains of activity; they are not necessarily representative of what actually or always happens within them. If we expect conformity, then we discover differences. At the other end of the (interpretative) spectrum, academic study of the Bible that veers too close to theological or ecclesial concerns of how the text speaks to the present is nothing short of apologetics.

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[97] Ibid.

This leads to a conclusion with great consequences, "One cannot interpret the biblical text without interpreting oneself and one's context."[98] We must acknowledge that the process of understanding the text functions on a conscious and(or) unconscious level that includes countless presuppositions and preunderstandings. According to Jeanrond,

> Text hermeneutics reflects not only on… general presuppositions of reading but also on more specific reader orientations, such as expectations of the text content, attitudes toward the communicative perspective of the text, attribution of authority to the text (e.g., the sacredness of a biblical text), and suspicion over against the text's claims.[99]

As we engage in the hermeneutical process, it should become apparent that our interpretation of the text leads to its interpretation of us.[100] According to Jeanrond, every act of text understanding is characterised by this twofold "hermeneutical circle", whereby "the whole of a text can only be understood by understanding its parts, and vice versa, and every reader approaches a text with a certain preunderstanding which will be either confirmed or challenged in the act of reading."[101] Jeanrond expands on these two elements. The first deals with our pre-understandings; essentially, we cannot understand something unless we already have a prior understanding of it, whether we are conscious of that prior understanding or not. For Bourdieu, this means "to understand without being told, to read between the lines."[102] This, of course, is problematic to anyone who

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[98] Brown, *A Handbook to Old Testament Exegesis*.

[99] Werner G. Jeanrond, "History of Biblical Interpretation," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary: H-J* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 433–434.

[100] Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, Rev. and expanded, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 22.

[101] Jeanrond, "History of Biblical Interpretation," 434.

[102] Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. John B. Thompson, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson, Reprinted. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 158.

wants to continue to assert that a singular objective understanding or meaning is desirable or possible. If we have a prior understanding of something, albeit at a rudimentary level, our understanding will be partial, and issues of subjectivity will be raised.[103]

At a deeper level, what Jeanrond was expounding on, or at least gravitating towards, is what Bourdieu details in *Language and Symbolic Power*. Our preunderstandings are very shadowy and, in many ways, unknown. We do not always know why we know something. So many of our preunderstandings are built upon preunderstandings that are built upon preunderstandings that were developed in childhood through our experiences of and socialisation within the world. This unknown becomes apparent when something is read or when a meaning is made clear by another's reading. Within discourse, understanding also means accepting and endorsing the linguistic associations and substitutions initially set up by the other.[104] According to Bourdieu, "ideological discourse…draws its efficacy from its duplicity, and can only legitimately express social interest in forms which dissimulate or betray it."[105]

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[103] Jeanrond, *Theological Hermeneutics: Development and Significance*, 5. From Bourdieu's perspective, the theorist's relations to the social world is an unexamined component of theoretical analysis as well as the objective social conditions on which it is founded. Michael Grenfell, "Introduction to Part II: Field Theory: Beyond Subjectivity and Objectivity," in *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*, ed. Michael Grenfell (Durham. U.K.: Acumen, 2008), 46. Bourdieu asserts that, "one's scientific practice to a knowledge of the 'knowing subject', as an essentially critical knowledge of the limits inherent in all theoretical knowledge, both subjectivist and objectivist." Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, ed. R. Nice (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1990), 27. Bourdieu utilises the concept of *habitus* to transcend dichotomies, in this case, subjectivity and objectivity. For Bourdieu, "The *habitus*, as the word implies, is that which one has acquired, but which has become durably incorporated in the body in the form of permanent dispositions. So the term constantly reminds us that it refers to something historical, linked to individual history, and that it belongs to a genetic mode of thought, as opposed to existentialist modes of thought." Pierre Bourdieu, *Sociology in Question*, trans. R. Nice (London: Sage, 1993), 86. For more on habitus, see Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 52–65; Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 37–42; Pierre Bourdieu, "The Genesis of the Concepts of 'Habitus' and 'Field,'" *Sociocriticism* 2, no. 2 (1985): 11–24.

[104] Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 158.

[105] Ibid.

The second element relates to the theory of de Saussure, briefly mentioned earlier, in which he states, "The whole has value only through its parts, and the parts have value by virtue of their place in the whole."[106] Jeanrond appeals to this theory and applies it to understanding. He notes, "[W]e can never understand a whole without understanding all of its parts; nor can we adequately understand the parts without seeing them functioning in the overall composition to which they contribute."[107] It is worth considering Schleiermacher here. Although he referred extensively to the "circle" in his writings that addressed understanding, he did not use the term *hermeneutic circle*.[108] However, while attempting to outline the parameters of hermeneutics,[109] he viewed the notion of the hermeneutic circle[110] as indicative of that *movement* functioning in and defining textual interpretation. The circular movement that operates in textual interpretation secures the

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[106] Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, 128. In reference to linguistic signs and their existence in isolation, de Saussure remarks, "to consider a term as simply the union of a certain sound with a certain concept is grossly misleading. To define it in this way would isolate the term from its system; it would mean assuming that one can start from the terms and construct the system by adding them together when, on the contrary, it is from the interdependent whole that one must start and through analysis obtain its elements." Ibid.

[107] Jeanrond, *Theological Hermeneutics: Development and Significance*, 5. For Green "This form of the hermeneutical circle is more interesting, for it turns out to be an indicator of the holistic nature of human perception and understanding." Green, *Theology, Hermeneutics, and Imagination: The Crisis of Interpretation at the End of Modernity*, 7.

[108] Jean Grondin, "The Hermeneutical Circle," in *The Blackwell Companion to Hermeneutics*, ed. Niall Keane and Chris Lawn (Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley, 2016), 402.

[109] According to Lawn and Keane, "understood simply as a philological method, and put forward the general problem of the circular structure of interpretation…Schleiermacher's position was the first formulation of a philosophically oriented hermeneutics, understood as a reflection on the meaning of human understanding through language, and the centrality of the hermeneutic circle to this understanding." Chris Lawn and Niall Keane, *The Gadamer Dictionary* (London ; New York: Continuum, 2011), 70.

[110]. Grondin notes that "the "circle" of the parts and the whole is viewed as a basic requirement of *coherence*. The interplay of the whole and the parts is not really a "circle" but a description of the necessary unity of purpose of any written text and thus its understanding". Grondin, "The Hermeneutical Circle," 402.

understanding of the whole text to an understanding of its parts.[111] Schleiermacher writes,

> *The vocabulary and the history of the era of an author relate as the whole from which his writings must be understood as the part, and the whole must, in turn, be understood from the part…*Complete knowledge is always in this apparent circle, that each particular can only be understood via the general, of which it is a part, and vice versa.[112]

Martin Heidegger later analysed this circular movement, and his work was later developed by Gadamer, who focused on the process as it related to historical textuality.[113] Most agree that contemporary hermeneutics' philosophical presupposition is primarily influenced by Hans-Georg Gadamer's work *Wahrheit und Methode* (*Truth and Method*).[114] For Gadamer, hermeneutics develops into "a more general procedure for understanding itself."[115] Gadamer expresses this as philosophical hermeneutics and describes it in terms of a hermeneutical circle.

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[111] Lawn and Keane, *The Gadamer Dictionary*, 71.

[112] Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, 24. Italics in the original.

[113] Lawn and Keane, *The Gadamer Dictionary*, 71.

"Given a text to interpret, this concept shows how the approach of the interpreter must be characterized by an unavoidable pre-given horizon of understanding which emanates from the text or from the historical and cultural context in which the author engages with it. As such, interpretative knowledge is a continuous interchange between concepts to be learned and concepts already learned or familiar, between learning and responding via the interpretative attitude. Knowledge is thus necessarily situated within a specific historical and psychological horizon and is the result of a stratification of circular concepts." Ibid.

[114] Schmidt, *Understanding Hermeneutics*, 2. According to Susan-Judith Hoffman "Since the publication of *Truth and Method* in German in 1963, Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics has sparked much criticism— notably from Emilio Betti in the 1960s, from Jürgen Habermas in the 1970s, and from Jacques Derrida in the 1980s. "Susan-Judith Hoffmann, "Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics and Feminist Projects," in *Feminist Interpretations of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, ed. Lorraine Code (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 83. For an overview of the Betti, Habermas, and Derrida debates, see Jean Grondin, *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 124–139.

[115] Lawn and Keane, *The Gadamer Dictionary*, 103.

Heidegger remarks, "Every interpretation which is to contribute some understanding must already have understood what is to be interpreted."[116] He is aware of the problem that one must presuppose an understanding of either the part or the whole in order to proceed. Either of these presuppositions would become an endless loop.[117] Once you become aware of this continual causal nexus, the apparent momentary solution would be to break out of the loop to avoid somehow those prejudices that might obstruct interpretation. However, Heidegger states, "What is decisive is not to get out of the circle, but to get in it in the right way."[118]

The purpose is to allow the interpreter to re-evaluate and challenge their own preconceptions and correct or revise them. For the current thesis, a distinctive group within Christianity, Pentecostalism, is explored in the earlier survey and the subsequent chapters. The purpose of exploration is to identify, appreciate, and understand the significance of specific predispositions, biases, and presuppositions that may be brought to the interpretive task, allowing for a re-evaluation of interpretation if necessary.

The hermeneutic circle does not involve closing the interpreter in upon themselves but rather a systematic openness to the *otherness* of the text and the voice of the *other*.[119] Indeed, understanding is the fundamental way in which we both participate and have a place in the world. Although the *other* is different, perhaps a different Christian

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[116] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 142.

[117] Schmidt, *Understanding Hermeneutics*, 73.

[118] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 143.

[119] Lawn and Keane, *The Gadamer Dictionary*, 71.

tradition, one considered strange to us, understanding acknowledges, accepts, and legitimises the *other*.[120]

The notion of the circular relationship based on the continually turning movement between a part of a text and its whole meaning, as noted above, also relates to the *sensus literalis* of Scripture. Gadamer asserts, "The literal meaning of Scripture… is not univocally intelligible in every place and at every moment. The whole of Scripture guides the understanding of individual passages: and again, this whole can be reached only through the cumulative understanding of individual passages."[121] Whether this alludes to maintaining a Grand Narrative or not, it does indicate that the Scriptures should be read in their entirety to understand individual passages. If we recall the survey, it asks which sections of the Old Testament have been read by students. The survey indicated that only 58.2% (n=53) of respondents had read the OT entirely[122]; it is assumed that this number would be even lower if the New Testament were included.

In the processes that contribute to and are determinative of any understanding of a text, Gadamer adopts Heidegger's insights regarding the hermeneutical circle that underscores the role of the *anticipation of meaning*.[123] He highlights that Heidegger's usage "is not primarily a prescription for the practice of understanding, but a description

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[120] George H. Taylor and Francis J. Mootz III, "Introduction," in *Gadamer and Ricœur: Critical Horizons for Contemporary Hermeneutics*, ed. George H. Taylor and Francis J. Mootz III (London ; New York: Continuum, 2011), 1.

[121] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 176.

[122] For further details of this question, see chapter 2, specifically *Figure 7*.

[123] Jean Grondin, "Hans-Georg Gadamer," in *The Blackwell Companion to Hermeneutics*, ed. Niall Keane and Chris Lawn (Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley, 2016), 399. See Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 293–294.

of the way interpretive understanding is achieved"[124]. Heidegger is not primarily concerned with the conditions in which a knowing subject can understand, but instead, with the ontological exploration related to the nature of such a being that has the capacity for these activities.[125] For Heidegger, the attitudes concerning inquiry, such as understanding and grasping, are modes of being of a particular being.[126] Heidegger refers to the being as *Da-sein*, which refers "both to the human being and to the type of being that humans have."[127]

Accordingly, Heidegger claims the hermeneutic circle, as related to textual interpretation, is a part of the broader occurrence of the circular structure of all human understanding,[128] which always presupposes a prior understanding of reality. Thus, we cannot approach the world without biases, as it is this inability to operate without prejudice that Heidegger calls "thrown" into the world.[129] *Da-sein* continually understands and is a way of being that concerns *projecting* future possibilities of interpretation; in this way, understanding is "thrown projection".[130] The future possibilities culminate in self-understanding.[131] Thrownness means we have already

[124] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 269.

[125] John Brookshire Thompson, *Critical Hermeneutics: A Study in the Thought of Paul Ricœur and Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 40.

[126] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 6.

[127] Michael J. Inwood, *Heidegger: A Very Short Introduction*, 25 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 22. Heidegger states, "The analysis of the characteristics of the being of *Da-sein* is an existential one. This means that the characteristics are not properties of something objectively present, but essentially existential ways to be. Thus, their kind of being in everydayness must be brought out." Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 126.

[128] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 290.

[129] Inwood, *Heidegger: A Very Short Introduction*, 24; Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 127.

[130] Charles Guignon, "Identity, History, Tradition," in *The Blackwell Companion to Hermeneutics*, ed. Niall Keane and Chris Lawn (Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley, 2016), 137.

[131] Schmidt, *Understanding Hermeneutics*, 137.

understood something; as Schmidt notes, "[T]he interpreter cannot escape the hermeneutic circle and attain direct knowledge."[132]

Heidegger notes, "The circle of understanding…is the expression of the existential *fore-structure* of *Da-sein* itself."[133] *Fore-structure* is central to Heidegger's hermeneutical concepts in *Sein Und Zeit* (*Being and Time*). It consists of three elements: "fore-having," "fore-sight," and "fore-conception."[134] The sum of these three "presuppositions" Heidegger refers to as the *hermeneutical situation*.[135] From his analysis of fore-structure, he recognises that "Interpretation is never a presuppositionless grasping of something previously given."[136] For Heidegger, the fore-structure or the hermeneutical situation must be considered if one is to have the possibility of grasping "primordial knowledge"[137] with the hope that the fundamental conditions of possible interpretation are fulfilled.[138] Much of these Heideggerian insights are the basis of Gadamer's reflection on prejudices (*Vorurteil*). Unlike Heidegger, Gadamer's focus regarding prior understanding is not an existential, ontological, or phenomenological description of the

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[132] Ibid.

[133] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 143.

[134] Ibid., 141–142. In the process of interpretation, we already possess in advance what we are attempting to interpret (fore-having or also pre-possession). Therefore, we interpret "under the guidance of a point of a perspective". Ibid., 141. Via this "guidance" we catch sight of what we are attempting to interpret. István Fehér remarks, "This kind of sight is the "fore-sight," in that it proceeds with care, caution, carefulness, wariness, circumspection, and prudence (the German term, "*Vorsicht*," means originally "caution"). Interpretation, finally, with its "fore-having," and "fore-sight," is always already moving ahead (or reaching out) in the direction of—having always already decided in favor of—a certain conceptuality, being thereby in the state of a certain intermediate or pre-conceptuality, and this is the "fore-conception." István M. Fehér, "Prejudice and Pre-Understanding," in *The Blackwell Companion to Hermeneutics*, ed. Niall Keane and Chris Lawn (Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley, 2016), 282.

[135] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 214.

[136] Ibid., 141.

[137] Ibid., 143.

[138] Ibid.

fore-structure; essentially, non-historical.[139] Instead, it is contained in "a tradition that constitutes the true historical horizon of our conscious being in the world."[140]

Gadamer asserts, "[T]hat all understanding inevitably involves some prejudice"[141] due to the anticipation of meaning in the process of understanding. It is always informed by the perspective we proffer in the process of understanding. For both Gadamer and Heidegger, the hermeneutical circle means that there is no understanding without prejudices.[142] Gadamer argues there are legitimate prejudices, and as such, "it is necessary to fundamentally rehabilitate the concept"[143], especially its meaning, which the Enlightenment has discredited. Prejudice as a prior judgement does not necessarily indicate a false judgement, as it can have both positive and negative values.[144] He endeavours to demonstrate how the word has acquired an almost a priori negative connotation and restricts it to something akin to false or "unfounded judgement."[145] Indeed, as a result of the Enlightenment and due to the ascendancy of method over the subject matter, prejudice and other key concepts, such as tradition and authority, have also been discredited and adversely refined.[146] However, Gadamer demonstrates how the notion of prejudice can be viewed positively.

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[139] Fehér, "Prejudice and Pre-Understanding," 283. Essentially, non-historical.

[140] Lawn and Keane, *The Gadamer Dictionary*, 77.

[141] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 272.

[142] Grondin, "The Hermeneutical Circle," 303.

[143] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 289.

[144] Fehér, "Prejudice and Pre-Understanding," 283. "Since "prejudice" plays a central role in philosophical hermeneutics, the reader must bear in mind its intended neutral connotation." Schmidt, *Understanding Hermeneutics*, 100.

[145] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 271.

[146] Fehér, "Prejudice and Pre-Understanding," 283. What the Enlightenment proposes is "a mutually exclusive antithesis between authority and reason… The Reformation, then, gives rise to a flourishing hermeneutics which teaches the right use of reason in understanding traditionary texts. Gadamer, *Truth*

Moreover, the notion of prejudice is to be seen as neutral when we consider that they are no more than the "condition for the possibility of *any* understanding since they provide the framework only within which we can first appropriate or try to grasp the meaning of that which we are trying to understand."[147] That is not to say that prejudices are not sometimes or even often negative. However, the content of the prejudice must determine its value, not the fact of it being prejudice itself.

In order to prove that legitimate prejudice[148] can be found, Gadamer rehabilitates the authority of tradition.[149] He argues that a tradition "needs to be affirmed, embraced, and cultivated. It is, essentially, preservation…Preservation is an act of reason though an inconspicuous one"[150]. Gadamer's view recaptures the importance of tradition and its construction, frequently employing concepts of origin and memory.[151] The place of tradition, in addition to practices of knowledge transmission, is essential to understanding.[152] It can be the result of reframing origins or memory in such a way as

and Method, 279. Gadamer concludes it appears that *historicism, despite its critique of rationalism and of natural law philosophy, is based on the modern Enlightenment and unwittingly shares its prejudices.* Furthermore, there is one prejudice of the Enlightenment that defines its essence: the fundamental prejudice of the Enlightenment is the prejudice against prejudice itself, which denies tradition its power." Ibid., 272–273.

[147] Georgia Warnke, "Literature, Law, and Morality," in *Gadamer's Repercussions: Reconsidering Philosophical Hermeneutics*, ed. Bruce Krajewski (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2004), 92. Emphasis added.

[148] According to Schmidt, prejudices may be either legitimate, based on the things themselves, or illegitimate, based on chance ideas and popular conceptions. Schmidt, *Understanding Hermeneutics*, 101.

[149] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 278–280.

[150]Ibid., 282.. For Gadamer, tradition does not necessarily resist reason, nor is it a burden of the unreflective past causing a distorted present. Lawn and Keane, *The Gadamer Dictionary*, 141.

[151] See discussion around myth, memory, and tradition – 4.1.1 Categories

[152] Wouter J. Hanegraaff, "Western Esotericism in Enlightenment Historiography: The Importance of Jacob Brucker," in *Constructing Tradition: Means and Myths of Transmission in Western Esotericism*, ed. Andreas B. Kilcher (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2010), ix.

to function as a mirror, one that reflects on one's self and one's context.[153] However, Davies reminds us, "The surface of the mirror is always distorted, and we cannot conceptualize the image which is being reflected unless we examine the surface of the mirror."[154] The point is that we must be aware of the deception. In a sense, memory and its construction are inextricably bound to forgetting. Similarly,

> No tradition can exist or stay alive without demarcating its own identity from something that is seen as representing its negative counterpart, its "other", and as a result, this "other" necessarily accompanies any tradition, as the shadowy background or dark canvas which allows it to draw the contours of its own identity in the first place. The presence of this shadow can, therefore, never be forgotten; but in order to fulfil its role as a negative background, neither can it be brought into the full daylight of memory and recollection. In short, it must be selectively remembered and selectively forgotten.[155]

In summary, it can be reasoned that the past, understood here (or in Gadamer) as "tradition", influences and has a place in constructing understanding. By being socialised into language, we adopt a set of prejudices, essentially linguistic practices that initially shape our understanding. These *practices* are inherited from and carried within our tradition, preserving a set of interpretations, particularly of meaningful or sacred texts.[156] Indeed, these interpretations remind us that to employ a language is to employ a perspective or worldview that is particular to the language itself. A perspective that gives a distinct view of the world, a view, according to Keane and Lawn, that is

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[153] Timothy Kubal, *Cultural Movements and Collective Memory: Christopher Columbus and the Rewriting of the National Origin Myth*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 43.

[154] Philip R. Davies, *In Search of 'Ancient Israel': A Study in Biblical Origins*, 3rd ed. (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 4.

[155] Hanegraaff, "Western Esotericism in Enlightenment Historiography: The Importance of Jacob Brucker," 91.

[156] Schmidt, *Understanding Hermeneutics*, 104–105.

"always partial, tendentious and embedded within a specific culture and place in history. We inherit prejudices, much like tradition (and the vehicle within which it travels, language), are not static and fixed."[157]

Furthermore, when we immerse ourselves in a tradition, apprehending and evaluating the elements consciously or subconsciously, we inevitably embed and pass on prejudices in the form of presuppositions.[158] Gadamer speaks here of the concept of effective history (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) to demonstrate the effectiveness of history within understanding itself. He states, "Understanding is, essentially, a historically effected event."[159] For Gadamer, "*Understanding is to be thought of less as a subjective act than as participating in an event of tradition*, a process of transmission in which past and present are constantly mediated."[160] We recognise here that the interpreter's subjectivity is no longer the focus of the cognitive process but rather *Wirkungsgeschichte,* which is consciously or otherwise operative within it. [161] We are embedded within effective history and must be aware of the hermeneutic situation. To do this is, according to Gadamer, "[A] task of peculiar difficulty. The very idea of a situation means that we are not standing outside it and hence cannot have any objective knowledge of it."[162] Although we can be aware that effective history is operative within us, the challenge is

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[157] Lawn and Keane, *The Gadamer Dictionary*, 141–142.

[158] Schmidt, *Understanding Hermeneutics*, 105.

[159] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 299.

[160] Ibid., 291.. Emphasis in original. He goes on to write, "This is what must be validated by hermeneutic theory, which is far too dominated by the idea of a procedure, a method." Ibid.

[161] Grondin, "Hans-Georg Gadamer," 399.

[162] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 301.

that we are unaware of how and when.[163] Gadamer reminds us, "history does not belong to us; we belong to it."[164]

According to Taylor and Mootz, "Understanding is always located within the situated and partial perspective of our prejudices and the tradition in which we are socialised. Our understanding is shaped by the way we belong to the world."[165] This *belonging* to the world is informed by our perspective, which, as noted above, is a product of our languages, histories, and traditions. Indeed, the causality dilemma certainly comes to mind here. It is the text that "brings a subject matter into language, but that it does so is ultimately the achievement of the interpreter. Both have a share in it."[166] Within the context of Gadamer's account of hermeneutics, the interpreter belongs to the traditions that frame the horizon from which interpretation begins. Indeed, as Westphal reminds us, "our interpreting will be shaped by the traditions that have formed us. What tradition sets *before* us will be understood in terms of what tradition has already done *within* us."[167] This relates to the notion of "doxic knowledge", described by Pierre Bourdieu as "[A] set of fundamental beliefs which do not even need to be asserted in the form of an explicit, self-conscious dogma."[168] According to Cécile Deer, Bourdieu employs

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[163] Grondin, "Hans-Georg Gadamer," 399.

[164] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 278.

[165] Taylor and Mootz III, "Introduction," 1.

[166] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 390.

[167] Merold Westphal, *Whose Community? Which Interpretation? Philosophical Hermeneutics for the Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2009), 73. "In the process of socialization we may internalize our parents' and teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and practices, but socialization is never complete, and they never cease to be a voice other than our own. So to seek to neutralize their impact in its totality is to try to silence the alterity of two voices, that of tradition and that of the text, which are themselves a confluence of traditions." Ibid., 273.

[168] Pierre Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, trans. R. Nice (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity, 2000), 16.

"*Doxa*"[169] to account for specific actions and practices within a traditional social group, making the natural and social world unquestionable.[170] In a social setting associated with tradition, the concept of doxa is for Bourdieu where "what is essential goes without saying because it comes without saying…[T]he tradition is silent, not least about itself as a tradition."[171]

For Gadamer, the movement within the hermeneutic circle is based on the tradition of understanding, both textual and non-textual, between individuals in the historical tradition of its interpretation, aiming to look for unity of meaning in the text. A complex relationship between language, understanding and history constructs the hermeneutic circle.[172] This is because, as Lawn and Keane note, "[E]very understanding of reality is linguistically mediated and language is always conditioned by its historical and existential pre-understanding. Thus, every historical understanding…is subject to historical belonging, or to a cultural tradition and the language that forms the horizon of understanding."[173]

As Gadamer rehabilitates the concepts of authority and tradition, he acknowledges the possibility of legitimate and positive prejudices, suggesting that something is to be

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[169] Deer describes doxa as "pre-reflexive intuitive knowledge shaped by experience, to unconscious inherited

physical and relational predispositions. Cécile Deer, "Doxa," in *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*, ed. Michael Grenfell (Durham: Acumen, 2010), 120.

[170] Ibid., 121.

[171] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. R. Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 165–167.

[172] Lawn and Keane, *The Gadamer Dictionary*, 77.

[173] Ibid.

gained within these traditional texts and their interpretation. In the process, fore-conception is employed to recognise one's prejudices and also as a way to project the text's horizon of meaning.[174] Schmidt notes, "To project the text's horizon, the interpreter must apply or translate the text to her own, and now expanded, horizon of meaning…In bringing a text to speak, the interpreter enters into a dialogue with the text as if it were another person. The fusion of horizons that is understanding occurs within this dialogue."[175] In addition, dialogue is predicated on the assumption of a common language, history, or tradition. Understanding, thus, entails a fusion of horizons that involves accepting the texts of a tradition as authoritative and seeing oneself as "belonging to" (*Zugehörigkeit*) the tradition shaped by these texts.[176]

Although Habermas adopts and endorses Gadamer's hermeneutics,[177] he objects to Gadamer's lack of *critical* thought regarding ideology. He also takes issue with Gadamer's claim of hermeneutic universality.[178] For Habermas, Gadamer is far too dependent on and subordinate to the concept of tradition. He sees Gadamer's position as conservative, limiting the possibility of a critique of the tradition. Habermas questions Gadamer's rehabilitation of tradition and assumes it would always favour the emergence

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[174] Schmidt, *Understanding Hermeneutics*, 114.

[175] Ibid.

[176] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 458–459.

[177] Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 309–310.

[178] Robert J. Dostal, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer* (Cambridge ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 4. See Jürgen Habermas, "A Review of Gadamer's Truth and Method," in *The Hermeneutic Tradition: From Ast to Ricœur*, ed. Gayle L. Ormiston and Alan D. Schrift (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1990), 213–244. For Habermas's identification of contentious issues with the hermeneutic claim to universality, see Jürgen Habermas, "The Hermeneutic Claim to Universality," in *The Hermeneutic Tradition: From Ast to Ricœur*, ed. Gayle L. Ormiston and Alan D. Schrift (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1990), 251–265.

of positive or *good* prejudice/s.[179] He asserts, "Gadamer's prejudice for the rights of prejudices certified by tradition denies the power of reflection."[180] Gadamer indeed argues that as interpreters, we cannot escape the embeddedness of tradition through inherited prejudice and claim any objective understanding. In Habermas's view, Gadamer has given too much priority to tradition over reason and has failed to allow for the dangers inherent in many ideologies, particularly the potentially distorting or biased nature of tradition.[181] Gadamer's strict adherence to the polarity of truth and method and his critique of all methodology suggests that the object of understanding, in this case, the biblical text, is a part of human tradition and not a physical object to which the natural scientific method can be applied. However, embracing an alternative position distanced from the object in self-reflective understanding is possible. This would permit the application of the method in a somewhat different sense to that of the natural scientific method.[182] The possibility of critique is one of the foremost charges levelled at Gadamer by Habermas, who states that he (Gadamer) "[F]ails to appreciate the power of reflection that is developed in understanding"[183]. Habermas views Gadamer as a relativist, as there is no way to test the validity of tradition.[184] Habermas agrees that reflection cannot escape the embeddedness of tradition, but "in grasping the genesis of the tradition from which it proceeds and on which it turns back, reflection shakes the dogmatism of life-practices."[185] For Habermas, reflecting on tradition and reconstructing

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179 Grondin, "Hans-Georg Gadamer," 525–526.

180 Habermas, "A Review of Gadamer's Truth and Method," 237.

181 Grondin, "Hans-Georg Gadamer," 525–526; Hoffmann, "Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics and Feminist Projects," 83.

182 Schmidt, *Understanding Hermeneutics*, 142.

183 Habermas, "A Review of Gadamer's Truth and Method," 236.

184 Lawn and Keane, *The Gadamer Dictionary*, 60.

185Habermas, "A Review of Gadamer's Truth and Method," 236.

it can bring to the surface the situation in which prejudice has been established over time. Processes uncovered in the reconstruction that may have been illegitimately preserved as a part of the tradition can be challenged. As Schmidt notes, [T]he one who understands is able, through the power of self-reflection, to reject that prejudice and … [critique] the tradition."[186] For Gadamer, the heart of the debate relates to,

> whether [as Gadamer argues] one sees the function of reflection as bringing something to awareness in order to confront what is in fact accepted with other possibilities - so that one can either throw it out or reject the other possibilities and accept what the tradition *de facto* is presenting - or whether [as Habermas argues,] bringing something to awareness *always dissolves what one has previously accepted*.[187]

Furthermore, Habermas calls for "a reference system that goes beyond the framework of tradition".[188] Citing Gadamer, Habermas agrees that language is the mode of being of tradition, and as such, the interpreter is bound by the horizon of language.[189] For Habermas, the critique of ideology is crucial to hermeneutic understanding. He views language as ideological, "a medium of domination and social power; it serves to legitimate relations or organized force."[190] He goes on to remark, "[I]t is a question not of deceptions within a language but of deception with language."[191] It is the fact that ideology utilises language to transmit tradition such that certain forms of communication

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[186]Schmidt, *Understanding Hermeneutics*, 143.

[187] Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, 34. Gadamer goes on to state, "The concept of reflection and bringing to awareness that Habermas employs (admittedly from his sociological interest) appears to me, then, to be itself encumbered with dogmatism, and indeed, to be a misinterpretation of reflection. Ibid., 34–35.

[188] Habermas, "A Review of Gadamer's Truth and Method," 238. .

[189] Ibid.; Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 489.

[190] Habermas, "A Review of Gadamer's Truth and Method," 239. Italics in original.

[191] Ibid., 239–240.

are distorted[192] that initially leads Habermas to challenge Gadamer.[193] For Habermas, a more rigorous critical methodology is essential within hermeneutic understanding to avoid the charge of relativism.[194] Gadamer argues that the critical element of hermeneutic reflection is possible by exposing the prejudices of an ideology.[195] Furthermore, the possibility of multiple correct interpretations does not necessarily point to relativism. "It is only according to the measuring stick of an absolute knowledge, something foreign to us, that this is a threatening relativism."[196] Hermeneutic reflection can unlock possibilities for understanding that would simply not exist without it. One of its purposes is to expose the prejudice/s of the interpreter to allow them to be critiqued.[197] According to Gadamer, Habermas misunderstands his statements relating to tradition. Gadamer comments,

> Now it is obvious that the phrase which I occasionally use, that much depends on establishing a connection with tradition, promotes misunderstanding. Contained within this is in no sense a preference for that which is customary, to which one must be blindly subservient. On the contrary, the phrase "connection to tradition" means only that the tradition is not exhausted by the heritage one knows and is conscious of.[198]

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[192] Habermas's analysis of psychoanalytic depth hermeneutics leads him to the conclusion that certain forms of communication are "systematically distorted." Jürgen Habermas, *Theory and Practice*, trans. John Viertel (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), 9.

[193] Gayle L. Ormiston and Alan D. Schrift, "Introduction," in *The Hermeneutic Tradition: From Ast to Ricœur*, ed. Gayle L. Ormiston and Alan D. Schrift (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1990), 21; Habermas, "The Hermeneutic Claim to Universality," 266.

[194] Schmidt, *Understanding Hermeneutics*, 150.

[195] Ibid., 149.

[196] Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Reply to My Critics," in *The Hermeneutic Tradition: From Ast to Ricœur*, ed. Gayle L. Ormiston and Alan D. Schrift (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1990), 283.

[197] Schmidt, *Understanding Hermeneutics*, 149.

[198] Gadamer, "Reply to My Critics," 288.

When dialogue exists, and conversation is not forced, there is the possibility that agreement can occur. However, the agreement does not have to be polarised. Gadamer states, "It is the idea of reason itself that cannot give up the idea of general agreement. That is the solidarity which unites us all"[199]. This would suggest that while the charge is that Gadamer fails to appreciate the power of reflection, Habermas values it too much and grants it false power.[200]

Ricœur contributes to the hermeneutical conversation and, in many ways, moves it further. There are many commonalities between the thought of Ricœur and Gadamer. Both philosophers consider *understanding* as the fundamental attitude of human life. The idea and purpose behind engagement and dialogue is to allow the *other* to be known. Through the process of understanding, we both participate in and belong to the world.[201] Furthermore, as previously mentioned, Gadamer and Ricœur share a general view that understanding is always *interpretive* and informed by our vantage point in the overall process of understanding. Although we can see a shared posture between the two philosophers, some significant differences must be emphasised.[202]

Ricœur held that Gadamer should have focussed more on the critical properties of hermeneutics, something which he seeks to do. Ricœur is concerned that Gadamer overemphasises the significance of belonging[203] and is therefore prevented "from really

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[199] Ibid., 289.

[200] Schmidt, *Understanding Hermeneutics*, 149.

[201] Taylor and Mootz III, "Introduction," 1. Italics in original.

[202] Piercey, "Paul Ricœur," 415.

[203] Ibid.

recognizing the critical instance"[204]. This suggests that how tradition is received requires further consideration. Jeanrond reminds us that every hermeneutics of retrieval requires a hermeneutics of suspicion.[205] While Ricœur's view was closer to Gadamer than to Habermas regarding belonging and tradition, he recognises hermeneutics has come to an impasse. For Ricœur, although Gadamer is partially correct, the main issue concerns the lack of the critical element of hermeneutics. To avoid relativism and break the impasse, Ricœur reasons that Gadamer must integrate methodological explanation and a hermeneutic of suspicion into his philosophical hermeneutics; a theory of explanation would help validate interpretation.[206] Ricœur's working definition of hermeneutics is "the theory of operations of understanding in relation to the interpretation of texts."[207] As previously noted, it is Dilthey who makes the distinction between explanation and understanding, separating the two, a shift for hermeneutics that Ricœur describes as "disastrous"[208]. He further remarks, "hermeneutics…must overcome the ruinous dichotomy, inherited from Dilthey, between "explanation" and "understanding."[209] For Ricœur, the dichotomy between the two is the fundamental issue. He attempts to resolve the problem, one which he describes as, "heavy with consequences for hermeneutics, which is thereby severed from naturalistic explanation and thrown back into the sphere

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[204] Paul Ricœur, "Hermeneutics and the Critique of Ideology," in *From Text to Action*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and John B. Thompson (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 297.

[205] Werner G. Jeanrond, "The Bible in Philosophy and Hermeneutics," in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible*, ed. John Kenneth Riches (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 324.

[206] Schmidt, *Understanding Hermeneutics*, 9, 160.

[207] Paul Ricœur, "The Task of Hermeneutics," in *From Text to Action*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and John B. Thompson (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 53.

[208] Ibid.

[209] Ricœur, "Hermeneutics and the Critique of Ideology," 325. Ricœur goes on to remind us that, "As is well known, this dichotomy arises from the conviction that any explanatory attitude is borrowed from the methodology of the natural sciences and illegitimately extended to the human sciences.", Ibid.

of psychological intuition."[210] In an effort to overcome the issue, Ricœur, emphasises the role of distanciation (*Verfremdung*)[211] in interpretation. Karl Simms defines distanciation as "the effect of being made *distant* from the producer of a text and the cultural conditions under which he or she wrote."[212] For Gadamer, the historical distance between the interpreter of a text and its author is alienating as it makes understanding the work more difficult. He restricts the application of the scientific method as it points to "alienating distanciation"[213], a notion that conflicts with belonging, which initially produces possible relation to the subject matter.[214] However, the notion of distanciation for Ricœur is very liberating as it allows the interpreter to understand themselves through the work without concern for the author's intention.[215] Ricœur argues that three forms of distanciation are introduced by writing. First, distanciation from the author; second, distanciation from the situation of discourse; and third, distanciation from the original audience.[216] This allows the texts to be expressions in their own right rather than simply expressions associated with a given history.[217] Distance then becomes necessary to allow a reasonable judgement to be made. However, as Alison Scott-Baumann notes, "[It] must also be balanced by the intimacy of acknowledging personal involvement in

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[210] Ricœur, "The Task of Hermeneutics," 59.

[211] An idea influenced by Gadamer.

[212] Karl Simms, *Paul Ricœur* (London: Routledge, 2003), 30. Italics in original.

[213] Ricœur, "The Task of Hermeneutics," 70.

[214] Schmidt, *Understanding Hermeneutics*, 153.

[215] Simms, *Paul Ricœur*, 41–42.

[216] Paul Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation," *Philosophy Today* 17, no. 2 (1973): 134.

[217] John Wall, *Moral Creativity: Paul Ricœur and the Poetics of Possibility* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 42.

meaning."[218] This balancing act between distanciation and belonging that Ricœur adopts relates to another difference in the thinking of Gadamer and Ricœur.

Ricœur's hermeneutics, unlike Gadamer's, attempts to placate differences. It must be pointed out that Ricœur does not simply ignore differences and the various dualities in his hermeneutics. He attempts to transcend them and avoid polarisation.[219] Ricœur understands each pair as dialectically interrelated.[220] "While Ricœur does not think we can overcome every opposition, he thinks we must synthesize whenever we can."[221]

Ricœur desires to avoid the dichotomy of *Verfremdung and Zugehörigkeit*. In order to overcome the *rejection* of distanciation, the challenge for Ricœur is to establish a means by which hermeneutics can *engage* objective scientific methodology while avoiding *embracing* the methodology that may ultimately control it.[222] For distanciation to be non-alienating, Ricœur proposes a critical addition[223] to the hermeneutics of tradition that introduces an explanatory instant into the process of understanding.[224]

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[218] Alison Scott-Baumann, *Ricœur and the Hermeneutics of Suspicion* (London ; New York: Continuum, 2009), 37.

[219] Piercey, "Paul Ricœur," 416.

[220] Ibid. Ricœur speculates, "to what extent the work deserves to be called *Truth AND Method,* and whether it ought not to be entitled instead *Truth OR Method.*" Ricœur, "The Task of Hermeneutics," 71.

[221] Piercey, "Paul Ricœur," 416.

[222] Boyd Blundell, *Paul Ricœur Between Theology and Philosophy: Detour and Return* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2010), 37.

[223] An addition because it appeals to concepts of understanding that already exist in Gadamer's hermeneutics of tradition.

[224] Blundell, *Paul Ricœur Between Theology and Philosophy: Detour and Return*, 38.

Boyd Blundell makes an interesting observation; "Gadamer began with art as a way of challenging the priority of distanciation over belonging, Ricœur begins with text as a way of challenging the Diltheyan dichotomy between explanation and understanding."[225] Ricœur proposes a hermeneutic *based* on issues and problems associated with the text rather than a hermeneutic *of* the text itself.[226] For Ricœur, the means to understanding the world is to read it as if it were a text due to the *distanciating* effect of *textuality*. According to Simms, the effect is viewed as constructive because it "allows the critical distance of *historicity* between the reader and the text's means of production."[227]

Ricœur writes that "what enables us to communicate at a distance is…the *matter of the text*, which belongs neither to its author nor to its reader"[228]. Ricœur's reflections supplement Gadamer's as they deal with the concerns of the literary object and the representation within literature. For Ricœur, distanciation is the most crucial element of textuality.[229] Simms concludes,

> Interpreting texts – doing hermeneutics – is the route to self-understanding as a human being, because being historical – having historicity – is a specifically human trait. Texts propose a world in which readers appropriate to understand their own world, and consequently to understand themselves. Texts are the medium through which readers arrive at self-understanding; they are the bridge between the subjectivity of the self and the objectivity of the world.[230]

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[225] Ibid.

[226] Ibid.

[227] Simms, *Paul Ricœur*, 42–43.

[228] Ricœur, "The Task of Hermeneutics," 74.

[229] Karl Simms, "Textuality," in *The Blackwell Companion to Hermeneutics*, ed. Niall Keane and Chris Lawn (Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley, 2016), 322.

[230] Simms, *Paul Ricœur*, 42–43.

Ricœur asks, "What is indeed to be understood – and consequently appropriated – in a text?"[231] It is not the authorial intention that is appropriated, which according to Ricœur, is hidden behind the text. Neither is it the historical situation common to the author and the original readers or the expectations of the original readers.[232] According to Ricœur, hermeneutics is not determined by the original addressee of the text. Instead, "Appropriation remains the concept for the actualization of the meaning as addressed to…anyone who can read."[233]

3.3 Contemporary Biblical Hermeneutics

With several decades of scholarship behind it, postmodernism is established and well-recognised from the standpoint of biblical interpretation. Its influence is generally taken for granted, although some do not accept the validity of the postmodern agenda and its often hyper-critical perspectives. This is wholly understandable given that postmodernism does not always have a fixed point, particularly when engaging in a discipline such as biblical studies, where we are dealing with a sacred text, the interpretation of which is taken very seriously.[234] According to George Aichele et al.,

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[231] Paul Ricœur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth, Texas: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), 92.

[232] Ibid.

[233] Ibid.

[234] Andrew P. Wilson, "Critical Entanglements: Postmodern Theory in Biblical Studies," *Brill Research Perspectives in Biblical Interpretation* 3, no. 3 (November 13, 2018): 1–2; Mihai Handaric, "Polyphony in the Biblical Text from a Postmodern Perspective," *Journal of Humanistic and Social Studies* 10, no. 2 (2019): 123–134.

"Postmodernism is characterized by diversity in both method and content".[235] It interrogates every metanarrative and development that makes universal claims. The approaches taken are not concerned with offering some definitive alternative reading of the biblical text. As such, there is no agreed-upon interpretation of the biblical text, no final account. Postmodernism is marked by diversity, different methods of reading and interpreting the Bible, and a range of methods within any given method. While such methodological diversity may point to a lack of unity and perhaps even confusion, there is consensus on the fact that there is no final interpretation of the text being produced.[236] As Aichele et al. note, "Other readings are always possible, and often invited."[237]

Since the late 1980s, much has changed in biblical scholarship[238], not least North America's and Western Europe's dominance in the discipline.[239] According to Roland

[235] Aichele, Miscall, and Walsh, "An Elephant in the Room: Historical-Critical and Postmodern Interpretations of the Bible," *JBL* 128, no. 2 (2009): 384.

[236] Ibid. Pollefyt and Bieringer agree that "The Bible contains a multiplicity of stories that cannot be reduced to a single metanarrative… [P]eople can step into the biblical world through a variety of different gates and travel many different trajectories in reading the texts." Pollefyt and Bieringer, "The Role of the Bible in Religious Education: Reconsidered: Risks and Challenges in Teaching the Bible," 135–136. Jean-François Lyotard writes, "Simplifying to the extreme, I define *postmodern* as incredulity toward metanarratives." Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Brian Massumi and Geoff Bennington (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), xxiv. For Collins, the especially critical nature of meta-narratives found within postmodernism rests on the interpretation and writing of history. A history that is inherently ideological, resulting in *them* and *us* mentality. John J. Collins, *The Bible after Babel: Historical Criticism in a Postmodern Age* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2005), 28.

[237] Aichele, Miscall, and Walsh, "An Elephant in the Room: Historical-Critical and Postmodern Interpretations of the Bible," 384.

[238] Simply for clarification, biblical studies is/are neither theology without doctrinal elements or religious studies that focus on Judaism and Christianity but rather as J. W. Rogerson and Judith Lieu note, "Biblical Studies is a collection of various, and in some cases independent, disciplines clustering around a collection of texts known as the Bible whose precise limits (those of the Bible) are still a matter of disagreement among various branches of the Christian churches. These disciplines range from Archaeology, Egyptology, and Assyriology through Textual Criticism, Linguistics, History, and Sociology, to Literary Theory, Feminism, and Theology, to name only some." J. W. Rogerson and Judith Lieu, eds., "Preface," in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2008), xvii.

[239] Partly connected to the decline in these economies since 2007-8 in favour of a shift towards Asia. Roland Boer and Fernando F. Segovia, eds., "Introduction," in *The Future of the Biblical Past:*

Boer and Fernando Segovia, "Voices from the majority of the globe have begun and continue to speak in ways that are reshaping biblical studies, relativizing the absolute claims that have been made and continue to be made by some of the discipline's practitioners."[240] In the evolving process, it is evident that biblical interpretation does not have a singular or even an agreed-upon past.[241] "It has multiple pasts, depending as much upon your conversation partner as her or his provenance. The futures that spring from these pasts are equally multiple."[242]

Following the emerging trajectory of biblical scholarship more generally, contemporary biblical hermeneutics also has many new and often louder *voices* than previously acknowledged or heard. Some examples of these now-familiar contemporary voices include those from queer criticism[243], postcolonial criticism[244], those informed by

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Envisioning Biblical Studies on a Global Key, Semeia studies no. 66 (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), xv.

[240] Ibid., xvi.

[241] Ibid.

[242] Ibid.

[243] The first noticeable appearance of Queer biblical criticism emerged in the North American context during the 1990s. It is influenced by approaches external to the world of religious studies, such as lesbian and gay studies and queer theory. In essence, the purpose of a queer reading, as Ken Stone states, "is to note the dynamics of gender and sexuality at work in both the text and its reception; and, instead of trying to control those dynamics, to let them loose through interpretation." Ken Stone, "Queer Criticism," in *New Meanings for Ancient Texts: Recent Approaches to Biblical Criticisms and Their Applications*, ed. Steven L McKenzie and John Kaltner (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013), 157–158, 171. For a summary of significant characteristics of queer criticism see Ibid., 157.

[244] Postcolonialism is a term that is much disputed, whether in terms of its use or its definition. An example of contention relates to the term itself, "Should there be a hyphen between "post" and "colonial," and if so, what might the hyphenated and unhyphenated forms signify?" Warren Carter, "Postcolonial Biblical Criticism," in *New Meanings for Ancient Texts: Recent Approaches to Biblical Criticisms and Their Applications*, ed. Steven L McKenzie and John Kaltner (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013), 97. Its methodology is diverse, and according to R. S. Sugirtharajah, the postcolonial voice initially came from those "who were once a part of British, European and American Empires, but now have some sort of territorial freedom while continuing to live with burdens from the past and enduring newer forms of economic and cultural neo-colonialism." R. S. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and the Third World: Precolonial, Colonial, and Postcolonial Encounters* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 247. When applied to the Bible, the focus of a postcolonial interpretation revolves around the issues of expansion, domination, and imperialism as they are seen as the drivers defining the biblical narratives. R. S. Sugirtharajah, "Charting the

disability studies[245], and ecological criticism.[246] These examples do not constitute an

exhaustive list but illustrate the breadth and diversity of contemporary frames. The

rationale for selecting these specific examples is based on a recent volume discussing

contemporary approaches to biblical criticism.[247] For these examples, the change over

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Aftermath: A Review of Postcolonial Criticism," in *The Postcolonial Biblical Reader*, ed. R.S. Sugirtharajah (Oxford, U.K.: Blackwell Pub, 2006), 17.

[245] The growing academic discipline of disability studies emerged in the 1980s in the British social sciences and further developed during the 1990s within the humanities in North America. Hector Avalos, Sarah J. Melcher, and Jeremy Schipper, "Introduction," in *This Abled Body: Rethinking Disabilities in Biblical Studies*, ed. Hector Avalos, Sarah J. Melcher, and Jeremy Schipper (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 1. Although the Bible is full of images of disability, biblical scholarship has only recently begun to engage in this space critically. Nyasha Junior and Jeremy Schipper, "Disability Studies and the Bible," in *New Meanings for Ancient Texts: Recent Approaches to Biblical Criticisms and Their Applications*, ed. Steven L McKenzie and John Kaltner (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013), 21. It must be emphasised that this critical engagement of disability does not offer a particular approach or method of biblical criticism. Nyasha Junior and Jeffrey Schipper note, "Biblical scholarship has not approached the study of disability as requiring a new type of critical method. Since disability is a subject within biblical scholarship rather than a new type of biblical scholarship, there is no single method for studying disability in the Bible." Ibid., 25. Research in this space is valuable as it helps understand more accurately attitudes toward disability, particularly attitudes in western culture that been generated and even perpetuated by the Bible. For more on this approach, see Candida R. Moss and Jeremy Schipper, "Introduction," in *Disability Studies and Biblical Literature*, ed. Candida R. Moss and Jeremy Schipper (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 1–12.

[246] Ecological criticism, also known as ecological hermeneutics, focuses on reading the biblical text essentially with a view to offering a response to current ecological crises facing the planet. Norman C. Habel, "Ecological Criticism," in *New Meanings for Ancient Texts: Recent Approaches to Biblical Criticisms and Their Applications*, ed. Steven L McKenzie and John Kaltner (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013), 39. Ecological hermeneutics can be understood in ways beyond an ecocritical analysis of the Bible. See Conradie, "What on Earth Is an Ecological Hermeneutics? Some Broad Parameters," 311; Tina Dykesteen Nilsen and Anna Rebecca Solevåg, "Expanding Ecological Hermeneutics: The Case for Ecolonialism," *JBL* 135, no. 4 (2016): 665–683. According to Norman Habel, "ecological criticism…is an ecocritical reading of the text from the perspective of Earth or the Earth community." Habel, "Ecological Criticism," 39. It was established, in part, as a to response to views such as those held by Lynn White Jr., who argued that the ecological crisis faced by the planet is rooted in Christianity. Lynn White Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155, no. 3767 (March 10, 1967): 1203–1207. The argument is based on an interpretation of the biblical texts that assume legitimate human dominion over creation (Based on a reading and interpretation of Genesis 1:26–28) and exploitation of the earth's natural resources, ultimately leading to the current ecological crisis. David G Horrell, *The Bible and the Environment: Towards a Critical Ecological Biblical Theology* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2014), 3–9. Ernst M. Conradie, "Towards an Ecological Biblical Hermeneutics: A Review Essay on the Earth Bible Project," *Scriptura* 85 (2004): 124–127. However, an interpretation from the biblical text can firmly support and perhaps recover the basic human function: caring for the land. Valmor Da Silva, "Bible and Citizenship," in *Reading Other-Wise: Socially Engaged Biblical Scholars Reading with Their Local Communities*, ed. Gerald O. West (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2007), 132. Though, there is a word of caution from Nestor, who states, "In mining the corpus of biblical literature, in an attempt to retrieve a persuasive biblical basis on which to construct an environmental ethic…we need to overcome any temptation to place upon that literature an interpretive burden, which it simply cannot bear." Dermot Nestor, "If Not Now, When? The Ecological Potential of Isaiah's "New Things","" in *Creation Is Groaning: Biblical and Theological Perspectives*, ed. Mary L. Coloe (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2013), 37. This temptation of false readings, essentially manipulating the biblical text, has led to many environmental disasters. Da Silva, "Bible and Citizenship," 132.

[247] See Steven L McKenzie and John Kaltner, *New Meanings for Ancient Texts: Recent Approaches to Biblical Criticisms and Their Applications* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013).

recent decades is noticeable. Queer and Postcolonial criticism hardly featured at the Society of Biblical Literature meetings in the early 1990s.[248] They were nomadic in many ways, not having their own established program units as they do today. Approaches informed by ecological criticism and disability studies were virtually non-existent. The shift in the diversity of approaches in biblical studies within the last two decades has been quite evident. The landscape of methods and approaches looks very different to what it did, with academics now frequently engaging the Bible in new ways, many of which were unfamiliar or in their embryonic stage in the 1990s.[249]

There are many different voices or interpretations, ranging in a dualistic paradigm between absolutists and relativists. The notion that anything is acceptable and that everything is a matter of interpretation causes some to be uncomfortable with the spectre of relativism.[250] It further causes others to lament "postmodernism", suggesting it has resulted in "unmitigated relativism and hermeneutic licentiousness"[251], within which all interpretations are equally valid and have no claim on each other.

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[248] The change in the landscape becomes more noticeable when one surveys the program book of the largest annual meeting of Bible scholars in the world, the Society of Biblical Literature. Steven L McKenzie and John Kaltner, eds., "Preface," in *New Meanings for Ancient Texts: Recent Approaches to Biblical Criticisms and Their Applications* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013), xii. McKenzie and Kaltner note, "There are now about twice as many program units—more than 160 now, and about 80 [in the early 1990s] …and many of them embrace new methods that have been widely accepted by scholars." Ibid.

[249] McKenzie and Kaltner, "Preface," xii.

[250] Although it generally appears that hermeneutics within biblical scholarship has avoided this sceptre by acquiring some degree of maturity.

[251] James K. A. Smith and Merold Westphal, "Foreword," in *Whose Community? Which Interpretation? Philosophical Hermeneutics for the Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2009), 9.

For some, there is a perception that something has been lost. For biblical hermeneutics, the perceived loss in a postmodern context is that of a chorus of *voices*, all singing in harmony in interpretive uniformity. Perhaps a loss felt by some religiously motivated interpreters, for whom all data, all sources of evidence and all possible lenses, unconsciously or otherwise, are fundamentally about the same thing: the revelation of some "truth" or "truth claim".[252] Of course, the loss felt could be for the historical-critical approach that once dominated biblical studies.

Whatever the motivation, a postmodern context is seen to be hostile to this apparent uniformity. Jione Havea sees it as challenging "the principles of faith and order, which presuppose certainty, harmony, and fixity."[253] One must dispel the myth that interpretive uniformity ever existed. Interpretive difference and multivocality within the Christian tradition have always been the norm. For example, conflict around interpretation and the absence of uniformity is evidenced in the early church by the various Catholic councils and creeds.[254] The First Council of Nicea in 325 CE, the First Council of Constantinople in 381 CE, and the Council of Chalcedon in 451 are just three renowned early ecumenical councils that had as their aim a uniformity of belief regarding particular matters. Divergences in interpretation evidenced by 'heresies' such as Arianism, Apollinarism, and Monophysitism were denounced to defend 'orthodoxy'.

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[252] Westphal, *Whose Community? Which Interpretation? Philosophical Hermeneutics for the Church*, 32.

[253] Jione Havea, "Is There a Home For the Bible in the Postmodern World?," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 42, no. 4 (2007): 547. See James K. A. Smith, *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism? Taking Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault to Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 15–30.

[254] Smith and Westphal, "Foreword," 10.

Indeed, it is difficult to escape the fusion or interweaving of postmodernism and interpretation. One must also remember that postmodernism is not an interpretive method but rather an attitude, which many biblical scholars reject for the wrong reasons, believing it to be either irresponsible or simply a concession to relativism.[255] Hugh Pyper states, "The main accusation against postmodernism is its irresponsibility, in a literal as well as derived sense. The postmodern reading…does not admit that it is answerable to anyone and refuses the responsibility of being faithful to the text, its historical context, and the intentions of its authors."[256] Many play on the fear of relativism while subtly or sometimes not so subtly pushing their own absolutist agenda.[257] According to Garrett Green, "The climate of relativism that has engulfed our world… pervades the cultural atmosphere in which Christians live today. It determines the context for our thinking and sets the problems for our living."[258] What is the response in the current situation? How does one preach the absolute Gospel in a time of what Green describes as "rampant relativism"?[259] Green observes two responses within the church and offers what he admits is a rudimentary and somewhat crude summary.[260] He states:

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[255] Hugh S. Pyper, "Postmodernism," in *New Meanings for Ancient Texts: Recent Approaches to Biblical Criticisms and Their Applications*, ed. Steven L McKenzie and John Kaltner (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013), 117.

[256] Ibid., 131–132. In biblical studies in recent years, with the rise of postmodernism, John Kutsko, executive director of the Society of Biblical Literature, notes an explosion in "ideological criticism and contextual biblical interpretation, on subjects like gender, sexual identity, race, and class—a major shift from a focus on the historical to a focus on the contemporary, and a swing in scholarship toward relevancy.

Lynn Garrett, "A Focus On the Contemporary.," *Publishers Weekly* 266, no. 45 (November 11, 2019): 1.

[257] Westphal, *Whose Community? Which Interpretation? Philosophical Hermeneutics for the Church*, 15.

[258] Green, *Theology, Hermeneutics, and Imagination: The Crisis of Interpretation at the End of Modernity*, 196.

[259] Ibid.

[260] Ibid. Something he admits while noting the nuanced form. The summary is by way of offering a current state of things. Ibid.

> Theological liberals seek an accommodation with the cultural ''situation''…If the relativity of all religious traditions has now come to light, they reason, we Christians are obliged to give up the exclusivism of our past and acknowledge that our path to truth is but one path… Conservatives, on the other hand, seek to defend the faith against the challenges of secularism, defiantly manning [sic] the barricades of absolute truth against the rising tide of relativism.[261]

Both camps assume that Christianity must take a side, either for or against its absolutist past, claiming to witness a unique truth. Simply put, liberals accept cultural relativism and reject the absolutist agenda, whilst conservatives reject relativism and return to the absolute truth claims of the past.[262]

However, postmodernist relativism need not mean that *anything goes*; Westphal offers three reasons to resist the fears:

> First, from the relativity of our interpretations to the historical, cultural, and linguistic perspectives out of which they arise (as can be seen easily enough by looking at church history), it simply does not follow that "anything goes," that each viewpoint is as good as any other. Second, those who use "anything goes" as a fear tactic and as a defence against admitting their own relativity regularly fail to identify anyone who holds such a view…. Third, there are good theological reasons to resist this fear. Under its influence, we end up thinking ourselves (our interpretations) to be absolute (at least in principle). We need not think that hermeneutical despair ("anything goes") and hermeneutical arrogance (we have "the" interpretation) are the only alternatives.[263]

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[261] Ibid. There is a kind of "culture wars" scenario playing itself out there somewhere and while that is important, it is the backdrop to the various interpretations of the text and the methodologies and/or motivations for same. Pollefyt and Bieringer, "The Role of the Bible in Religious Education: Reconsidered: Risks and Challenges in Teaching the Bible," 117.

[262] Green, *Theology, Hermeneutics, and Imagination: The Crisis of Interpretation at the End of Modernity*, 196–197.

[263] Westphal, *Whose Community? Which Interpretation? Philosophical Hermeneutics for the Church*, 15. "We can acknowledge that we see and interpret "in a glass – darkly" or "in a mirror, dimly" and that we know "only in part" (1 Cor. 13:12), while ever seeking to understand and interpret better by combining the tools of scholarship with the virtues of humbly listening to the interpretations of others and above all to the Holy Spirit." Ibid.

Beyond the spectrum of the interpretative options that exist between these poles, if we consider interpretations as either written, typically in some publication, preached in a church context, or undertaken in private during personal reading in the devotional space,[264] the scale of the many *voices* becomes clear. Multiple voices are naturally heard as relativistic, although a case can be made for the relativity of finitude instead of relativism.[265] Others tend toward multiple, not necessarily relativist, interpretations and welcome an opportunity to engage with fresh *voices* and consider how we may still appreciate the Bible with increased sensitivity in our postmodern world. Postmodern readers typically employ a "hermeneutic of suspicion" and ultimately strive to engage with interpreters where both sides acknowledge their various agendas, perspectives, and ideologies.[266] For this readership, Pollefeyt and Bieringer acknowledge, "[T]he Bible is seen by many as supporting patriarchy, anti-Judaism, slavery, anthropocentrism, violence, or intolerance".[267] This makes it increasingly difficult for those teaching the Bible to maintain interest from listeners and, more importantly, present the text as relevant in or to contemporary culture. The temptation can be to avoid "problem" passages, which can cause challenges when working with the text.[268]

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[264] Westphal, *Whose Community? Which Interpretation? Philosophical Hermeneutics for the Church*, 13. The Church is not an isolated body that exists in a vacuous state. Rather it comprises members of the body of Christ, and according to Merold Westphal, "these three modes of interpretation are the ways in which the church interprets its Scripture. If the church misunderstands this vital task and privilege, it misunderstands its own identity, both communally and individually. Ibid.

[265] Smith and Westphal, "Foreword," 11.

[266] See Aichele, Miscall, and Walsh, "An Elephant in the Room: Historical-Critical and Postmodern Interpretations of the Bible," 383–404.

[267] Pollefyt and Bieringer, "The Role of the Bible in Religious Education: Reconsidered: Risks and Challenges in Teaching the Bible," 117.

[268] Ibid.

It is well known that there are myriad voices or approaches within the hermeneutical arena. Suppose one was to ask why? The simple answer would be that each is driven by its specific context and, in many ways, agenda. Feminist[269] and postcolonial hermeneutics are examples of a critical interpretation process that begins with a "hermeneutics of suspicion" that scrutinises the interpreter's presuppositions and agenda.[270]

It is interesting to note that in the early 1990s, many approaches were presented as criticisms, most with specific methods associated with them. However, this is not the case today. McKenzie and Kaltner note, "While most still sport the title "criticism," the authors… point out that their topics do not represent methods that can be delineated through a series of steps but are rather approaches or perspectives—ways of looking at

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[269] According to Collins, *"Of all the voices from the margins that have emerged in biblical scholarship over the last several decades, none is louder, or has commanded more attention, than that of feminist criticism."* Collins, *The Bible after Babel*, 75. This voice allows the biblical text to be interpreted in such a way as to counter patriarchal readings, which have traditionally been used to discriminate against women and encourage interpretations that recover marginalised or disregarded texts and characters. Furthermore, the approaches allow androcentric tendencies to be identified within biblical text and commentaries, resisting androcentric ideology. It must be noted from the outset that the feminist approach does not claim objectivity. It is more concerned with *resisting* the categories and definitions that males (including male authorship and historically male-orientated interpretations) have placed on women. Danna Nolan Fewell, "Reading the Bible Ideologically: Feminist Criticism," in *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application*, ed. Steven L. McKenzie and Stephen R. Haynes, Rev. and expanded. (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster, John Knox Press, 1999), 268. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza states, "Feminist biblical interpretation is thus best understood as a site of struggle over meaning rather than as a means to provide definitive interpretations of biblical texts." Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Changing Horizons: Explorations in Feminist Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), ebook. For a summary of the approach, see Marie-Theres Wacker, "Feminist Criticism and Related Aspects," in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies*, ed. J. W. Rogerson and Judith Lieu (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2008), 634–635. For a broad overview of methods of Feminist biblical interpretation, see Ibid., 643–649. One of the major strengths of feminist readings of the biblical text is the diverse range of approaches they employ. Esther Fuchs points out we must also consider "[t]he differences between the various feminisms, e.g. The differences between Anglo-American and French feminisms and the differences between first world and global feminisms." Esther Fuchs, *Feminist Theory and the Bible: Interrogating the Sources*, ebook., Feminist studies and sacred texts series (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016), 1.

[270] Both bodies of thought have concerned themselves with the study and defence of marginalised 'Others' within repressive structures of domination, and, in so doing, both have followed a remarkably similar theoretical trajectory.

the Bible. They are lenses, if you will, or angles for addressing its literature."[271] This is perhaps an indication of a further change within biblical studies. The shift in the presentation of approaches may be partially due to the defensive focus of practitioners in the early 1990s. To respond to charges of subjectivity, they offered approaches deemed to be academically more sophisticated and critically more rigorous. However, in contemporary biblical studies, McKenzie and Kaltner suggest there is perhaps more openness concerning the subjectivity of any given interpretation and less of a need to be defensive.[272] There is less of an appeal to a rigid method that seeks to attain "the meaning of the Bible" and more acknowledgement and appreciation for the fact that "we all read it from different, albeit sometimes shared, vantage points, be they ideologies, orientations, or,… the platform of insights from an adjacent discipline."[273]

3.4 Summary

The examples of contemporary approaches to biblical criticism do not constitute an exhaustive list. However, they are given merely to illustrate the issue of how presuppositions tend to inform outcomes and how we thus tend towards multiple (though not always, if ever, relativist) readings. If we assume the purpose of "reading" a given text, in this case, the biblical text is ultimately an effort to make sense of the text[274] and to assign some meaning; then it is hardly surprising that we can each interpret biblical texts differently. The very fact that we each hold our own presuppositions and preunderstandings,

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[271] McKenzie and Kaltner, "Preface," xii.

[272] Ibid., xii–xiii.

[273] Ibid., xiii.

[274] Marc Zvi Brettler, *How to Read the Bible*, 1st ed. (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 2005), 1.

that we each may have different views on the nature of the biblical text and the purposes and goals of interpretation, demands as much.

While the legitimacy of multiple, competing and even hostile interpretations of the Bible may be acceptable, this is far from saying that any and all interpretations are acceptable.[275] Pollefyt and Bieringer remark,

> While we object to reducing the biblical text to one single and fixed meaning, we still find it necessary to develop ways to exclude certain other meanings. We need hermeneutical rules or principles that guide us in identifying which readings might *not be* acceptable. Our approach assumes that the criterion should not only be sought solely in the past… but also in the future, the very one presented to us in an encounter with the world of the biblical text.[276]

In this discussion of the various "postmodernist" agendas, it is essential to note the holistic and underlying process for "othering" involved. Reading a biblical text can often result (intentionally or otherwise) in isolating some form of distinction, an "us" and *our* reading and a "them" and *their* reading. In many ways, this is methodologically permissible, given the influence and significance of context and interpretative tradition.

In summary, it would seem that before we can even begin to analyse how Pentecostals interpret the biblical text, it is imperative to understand the development and implications of hermeneutics on the very act of interpretation itself. Having reviewed something of the early development of hermeneutics as a discipline and the tendency in

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[275] Pollefyt and Bieringer, "The Role of the Bible in Religious Education: Reconsidered: Risks and Challenges in Teaching the Bible," 138.

[276] Ibid.

contemporary hermeneutics to acknowledge and embrace presuppositions and preunderstandings as unavoidable and with that, the necessity, even the desirability of multi-vocality, we can begin to see how it is our situatedness or context that is key to biblical interpretation. Perhaps even *the* key.

Accordingly, we must situate ourselves in the hermeneutical discussion before we begin to try and delineate or develop our own hermeneutic. Likewise, we need to situate ourselves in the Pentecostal context to discuss Pentecostal hermeneutics, in this case, the current Australian variety. Having identified that it is ultimately a matter of hermeneutics that we are facing when we consider how Pentecostals interpret and apply the biblical text, it is necessary that we now turn to Pentecostalism and consider some of its developments as a religious phenomenon. Understanding the development of Pentecostalism more broadly and specifically in Australia will provide the background to chapter five, which will explore the emergence of Pentecostal's academic engagement with the biblical text.

Chapter Four: Pentecostalism

4.1 Introduction

Despite the many expressions and groupings within Pentecostalism[1], a broadly defined Pentecostal identity is distinct from other Christian denominations. Of course, being an aggregate of such diversity, a "general" Pentecostal identity runs the risk of having no defining identity. According to Robeck Jr, if the distinctiveness of the individual Pentecostal groups becomes all that defines Pentecostalism, then "the real character, contribution, and impact of the whole Movement may be lost"[2]. Thus, while necessarily recognising the complexities captured by a single term, we must always be alert to the fact that singular definitions simultaneously disguise that complexity.

There is an inherent tension between sameness and difference.[3] Both are constructed via a categorisation process, which ultimately attempts to maintain order in what some may view as chaos. Categories can reflect an essentialist nature if (or when) used in specific contexts. Many outside the realm of academic endeavour and within seem oblivious to the issues surrounding categories and essentialism. Hence, there is a need for some clarification around categories, categorical thinking, and essentialism.

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[1] This included charismatic Christianity.

[2] Cecil M. Robeck Jr., "Toward Healing Our Divisions. Reflecting on Pentecostal Diversity and Common Witness" (Presented at the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Springfield, MO, 1999).

[3] Mathew L. Sheep, Glen E. Kreiner, and Gail Fairhurst, "I Am…I Said: Paradoxical Tensions of Individual Identity," in *The Oxford Handbook of Organizational Paradox*, ed. Wendy K. Smith et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 457.

4.1.1 Categories

With the above in mind, when it comes to beginning the discussion regarding *Pentecostalism*, both within the global *pentecostal* movement and the Australian context, one almost immediately becomes aware of the complexities, the dynamics, and the diversity in which the terms *Pentecostal*, *Pentecostals*, and *Pentecostalism* seek to encapsulate.[4] Jelle Creemers echoes a view held by many. He remarks, "one easily speaks about 'the Pentecostal movement' [or Pentecostalism], but it is seldom clear what this designation refers to."[5] The demarcation lines between the various groups in the movement are often blurred, making it difficult to pinpoint the qualities that constitute sameness and difference.[6] Despite the nearly ubiquitous presence in the literature then, terms like *Pentecostal*, *Pentecostals*, or *Pentecostalism* are not what we should explain things with. Rather, they are terms that themselves require an explanation.[7]

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[4] The diversity is evident from the variety of responses in the 2016 Australian Census. To the question of religious affiliation, most participants who identify as Pentecostal simply respond "Pentecostal." In contrast, many others identify with a particular *brand* of Pentecostalism, such as the Australian Christian Churches (Assemblies of God), C3 Church Global (Christian City Church), Foursquare Gospel Church, Full Gospel Church of Australia (Full Gospel Church), United Pentecostals, Revival Fellowship, and several others.

Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing: Reflecting Australia - Stories from the Census, https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/2071.02016?OpenDocument [Accessed 19 May 2020].

[5] Jelle Creemers, *Theological Dialogue with Classical Pentecostals: Challenges and Opportunities* (London: T & T Clark, 2015), 9. For Creemers, "Doing research on Pentecostalism is like chasing a rainbow. From a distance, it is a bright, multi-coloured and impressive phenomenon, but when one tries to approach and analyse it in detail…its colours vanish and the researcher is left with a puzzling combination of fascination and frustration." Ibid.

[6] For a further discussion on the demarcation lines between the various groups in the movement see section 4.2.5 Pentecostal Taxonomy on page 160.

[7] Rogers Brubaker, "Ethnicity without Groups," *European Journal of Sociology* 43, no. 2 (August 2002): 165.

Categories make sense of our world, and categorical thinking is the inherent cognitive process that produces and orders these categories. In our everyday lives, the unconscious categorisation process extends beyond things to include abstractions.[8] Johannes van der Ven offers several examples, such as "events, actions, emotions, spatial relations, social relations, forms of power and authority and, of course, all sorts of cultural phenomena, including religious ones."[9] According to George Lakoff, "Categorization is not a matter to be taken lightly. There is nothing more basic than categorization to our thought, perception, action, and speech."[10] When comparing, one employs categories based on features or characteristics attributed to them. Lakoff remarks, "Without the ability to categorize, we could not function at all, either in the physical world or in our social and intellectual lives. An understanding of how we categorize is central to any understanding of how we think and how we function."[11] The critical point is that we all think in categories as a way to make sense of the world around us, to give it pattern and shape.[12] Without categories, one is left with what Henry James referred to as "one great blooming, buzzing confusion"[13], likened by James to that of a newly born infant's impression of the world.[14]

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[8] van der Ven, *Human Rights or Religious Rules?*, 117.

[9] Ibid. Examples of cultural phenomena in the religious sphere are provided by van der Ven and includes such abstractions as "'rituals', 'prayers', 'sermons', and 'God concepts'." Ibid.

[10] George Lakoff, *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987), 5.

[11] Ibid., 6.

[12] Dermot Nestor, "We Are Family: Deuteronomy 14 and the Boundaries of an Israelite Identity," *The Bible and Critical Theory* 9, no. 1 & 2 (2013): 41.

[13] William James, *Psychology: Briefer Course* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Press, 1982), 24.

[14] Ibid.

4.1.2 Categorical Thinking

We recognise the value of categorical thinking when at a glance, we want to make a distinction between a snake and a stick. While categorical thinking is an essential capability of the mind, according to de Langhe and Fernbach, for categories to have value, they must be both *valid* and *useful*. For categories to be *valid*, they cannot be the result of arbitrarily dividing a homogenous group. For categories to be *useful*, they must behave differently in some significant way.[15] From the example above, de Langhe and Fernbach note, "It is useful to differentiate snakes from sticks because that will help you survive a walk in the woods."[16]

Since categorical thinking helps us make sense of the world, we are all justified in thinking categorically.[17] However, while the process is illuminating and necessary, it can have some adverse side effects. If we consider the terms *Pentecostal*, *Pentecostals*, and *Pentecostalism*, we can see how the processes and procedures that inform categorical thinking, not to mention their application, can potentially generate problems. First, there is a tendency to *compress the* membership of a category. This can cause one to overlook the variation and diversity within an established category and contribute to a belief that members of a category are more alike than they are in reality[18] or, that an

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[15] Bart de Langhe and Philip Fernbach, "The Dangers of Categorical Thinking," *Harvard Business Review* (October 2019): 82.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Wonsuk Ma, "Biblical Studies in the Pentecostal Tradition: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*, ed. Murray W. Dempster, Bryon D. Klaus, and Douglas Petersen (Oxford, U.K.: Regnum Books International, 1999), 54.

individual member or sub-category represents the entire category.[19] Second, categorical thinking can cause one to *amplify* or exaggerate differences within and across boundaries. Stereotypes are perhaps an obvious example of this.

For example, a shared belief about the characteristics thought to be typical of a particular Pentecostal category or even the movement, more generally, can lead to arbitrary judgements and inaccurate conclusions.[20] According to Wolfgang Vondey and Martin Mittelstadt, "Stereotypes cast Pentecostals as anti-intellectual and concerned more with the pulpit than the lectern."[21] This is generally understood to result from the fundamental anti-intellectualism among early Pentecostals.[22] However, James Smith argues that simply because "early Pentecostal theology could not marshal the categories of *academic* theology, it was not, therefore …anti-intellectual."[23] Nevertheless, whatever the precise reasons for the charge of anti-intellectualism, the perception of it was and is undoubtedly robust.

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[19] Lakoff, *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind*, 5.

[20] de Langhe and Fernbach, "The Dangers of Categorical Thinking," 85.

[21] Wolfgang Vondey and Martin William Mittelstadt, eds., *The Theology of Amos Yong and the New Face of Pentecostal Scholarship: Passion for the Spirit* (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2013), 1.

[22] Ibid.; Robby Waddell, "Hearing What the Spirit Says to the Churches: Profile of a Pentecostal Reader of the Apocalypse," in *Pentecostal Hermeneutics: A Reader*, ed. Lee Roy Martin (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013), 194–195.., Ibid., 194–195. However, if we accept that Pentecostalism was historically judged to be anti-intellectual, the increase in critical academic reflection does challenge this. Although as Grey points out, [I]t is clear that the academic voice does not necessarily represent the global voice of the Pentecostal movement in all its diversity." Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 32. Furthermore, the rejection of creeds by early Pentecostals in the North American has led to the stereotype that associates the rejection of creeds with a broader rejection of academic and systematic theology among classical Pentecostals. However, this logic cannot be sustained, as Vondey asserts, "Most classical Pentecostals do not reject the content of the creedal confessions and have little concern about using the creeds to support their own beliefs." Wolfgang Vondey, *Beyond Pentecostalism: The Crisis of Global Christianity and the Renewal of the Theological Agenda* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2010), 88–89.

[23] James K. A. Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2010), 26.

The third and perhaps most subtle problem is the lack of flexibility. Once categorical frames and structures have been imposed, they are often treated as fixed or static. De Langhe and Fernbach refer to this as *fossilization*[24] and suggest that "Categories lead to a fixed worldview. They give us a sense that this is how things are, rather than how someone decided to organize [them]."[25] While these three examples resemble each other, they are not the same since they can evidence themselves differently and for different purposes.

4.1.3 Essentialism

Whenever we discuss prominent or subtle examples of, or problems associated with and generated by categorical thinking, the question of essentialism enters the conversation. According to Susan Gelman, "essentialism is the view that categories have an underlying reality or true nature that one cannot observe directly, but that gives an object its identity."[26] As a cognitive bias, essentialism influences categorical thinking in insightful ways.[27] Gelman asserts, "It can be helpful in making valuable category-based inferences."[28] However, she also highlights some serious issues. For Gelman, the most significant is that essentialism promotes the process whereby generalisation occurs,

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[24] de Langhe and Fernbach, "The Dangers of Categorical Thinking," 90.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Susan A. Gelman, *The Essential Child: Origins of Essentialism in Everyday Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 8. "Essentialism is the extent to which members of a given social group or social category are perceived to have some immutable underlying characteristics ("essence") in common that defines their group membership" Ibid., 6.

[27] Gelman, *The Essential Child: Origins of Essentialism in Everyday Thought*, 6.

[28] Ibid., 296.

attributing behavioural stereotypes to both a group and individual members and ultimately justifying stereotyping of social categories.[29] Furthermore, evidence suggests that psychological essentialism encourages stereotype endorsement[30] and self-stereotyping.[31] While recent psychological studies converge to suggest that essentialism is a reasoning heuristic that is readily available to both children and adults, according to Brewer and Yuli, the danger is that it can cause a tendency,

> [t]o see some groups as having a deep-seated, unchanging essence that is shared by all group members and defines who they are…Whenever people believe or intuit that there is a deep-seated and shared essence of a social group, they fail to recognize the extent to which the category is contingent and constructed. In particular, they mistakenly infer that the category is inalterable and inductively potent: Social groupings are mistakenly seen as fixed and unchangeable, and as powerful sources of judgments about category members.[32]

While there is a need to be aware of the risks associated with essentialism, awareness of essentialism can equally have advantages. The notion of stereotype or a form of stereotype as a tool to discover a phenomenon's essence is well known in sociological and psychological studies. Weber's heuristic device, the "Ideal Type", is an example of

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[29] Ibid. Marilyn B. Brewer and Masaki Yuki, "Culture and Group Processes: Defining the Interface," in *Culture and Group Processes*, ed. Masaki Yuki and Marilyn B. Brewer (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 7.

[30] See B. Bastian and N Haslam, "Psychological Essentialism and Stereotype Endorsement.," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, no. 42 (2006): 228–235. B. Bastian and N Haslam, "Psychological Essentialism and Attention Allocation: Preferences for Stereotype Consistent and Inconsistent Information.," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, no. 147 (2007): 531–541.

[31] See J. M. Coleman and Y Hong, "Beyond Nature and Nurture: The Influence of Lay Gender Theories on Self-Stereotyping.," *Self and Identity*, no. 7 (n.d.): 34–53.

[32] Brewer and Yuki, "Culture and Group Processes: Defining the Interface," 17–18. André Droogers also highlights the risk presented by a static and bounded view of cultural, religious, and social characteristics, promoted by an essentialist perspective, one that ignores "the dynamics brought about by both internal tensions and external influences." André Droogers, "Essentialist and Normative Approaches," in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan Anderson et al. (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2010), 31.

this and is an aid in reducing complexity in the process of analysis.[33] Since the ideal type

is a construct that does not occur in reality, the ideal type of Pentecostal adherent does

not exist, just as there is no essential Pentecostal biblical scholar or a stereotypical[34]

Pentecostal theologian. Nonetheless, the ideal type can often assist analysis and help to

identify core characteristics.[35] This said, it must be acknowledged that it is not easy to

make broad statements that are valid when discussing either Pentecostals or

Pentecostalism. If one were to compare the different *Pentecostal* contexts, there would

be a considerable variation of the essentialist elements and to such an extent that where

elements are celebrated in one context, they are criticised in another.[36]

Droogers asserts that essentialist expression can be found in the writing of scholars

attempting to offer a general category of Pentecostalism. They assume characteristics

that readily permit essentialist views on Pentecostalism to be integrated.[37] Although it

is generally agreed that a shared and somewhat homogenous spirituality defines

Pentecostalism, the use of the terms *Pentecostal*, *Pentecostals*, and *Pentecostalism* can

give an impression of cohesion and coherence when, in fact, such cohesion and

coherence rarely, if ever, exists. This underlying spirituality of Pentecostalism's various

categories is regarded as similar among and across different theologies, traditions,

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[33] Droogers, "Essentialist and Normative Approaches," 32. See Richard Swedberg, "How to Use Max Weber's Ideal Type in Sociological Analysis," *Journal of Classical Sociology* 18, no. 3 (2018): 184. According to Richard Swedberg, "[I]t is clear that the ideal type can help…to successfully approach a new topic; to advance the analysis through a comparison of the ideal type to reality and, by doing so, discover something new." Ibid.

[34] While there may be a stereo-typical something, the cognitive frame of the stereo-type is itself a construct into which they are placed. What is real, is a big question: the perception or that which is perceived? While this an interesting question it will not be pursued in this thesis.

[35] Droogers, "Essentialist and Normative Approaches," 32.

[36] Ibid., 35.

[37] Ibid., 40–41.

cultures, and ecclesiastical structures.[38] Albrecht affirms this and notes that "amidst the many Pentecostal spiritualities, there is a *core* spirituality, as experience in and of the Spirit that unifies the vast variety."[39] He further remarks, "This core spirituality gives a sense of unity to the conglomerate of classifications within the movement."[40]

Though it is difficult to circumvent both essentialist and normative elements when researching Pentecostalism, Droogers concludes, "these approaches have the potential to facilitate the understanding and analysis of Pentecostalism. Essentialism can help to discover core characteristics."[41] While this study offers a broad overview of the worldwide Pentecostal phenomena, the main focus is not to represent the universal but rather a localised and concrete expression of it within Australia. In doing so, the study hopes to acknowledge rather than ignore the dynamics brought about by internal tensions and external influences and recognise the presupposition that this community is a variety of the (very) general category "Pentecostalism".[42]

While the above is not an exhaustive discussion of the negative effect of categorical thinking or the phenomenon of psychological essentialism, it does function to highlight

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[38] Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit*, 28–29. Daniel E. Albrecht and Evan B. Howard, "Pentecostal Spirituality," in *The Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism*, ed. Cecil M. Robeck Jr. and Amos Yong (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 235.

[39] Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit*, 28–29.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Droogers, "Essentialist and Normative Approaches," 47. This is the intention of Weber's notion of the ideal type. Although as Swedberg notes, "There seems to exist a general agreement that Weber's concept is very difficult and in need of much explication. Many attempts have consequently been made to unlock the secrets of Weber's concept; and no interpretation is generally accepted." Swedberg, "How to Use Max Weber's Ideal Type in Sociological Analysis," 195.

[42] Droogers, "Essentialist and Normative Approaches," 40.

certain risks associated with a foundational cognitive orientation to *classify* and to *order*. In light of this, one needs to be attentive to an understanding of the Pentecostal tradition, one that has been inclusive of difference in and of itself and through its evolution. In an effort to navigate a path between coherence and diversity, this thesis is concerned with a particular category of Pentecostalism, that of "Classical Pentecostalism", and the Australian variety more specifically.[43] This category reminds us that while Australian Pentecostalism may be viewed as a singular and possibly unique expression from a global or even domestic perspective, it is an assumption that itself belies considerable diversity. For the Australian context, Pentecostalism is but an instantiation of a religious tradition within what is widely recognised as an incredibly diverse country. A diversity that is then recognised as more granular within the specific tradition of Pentecostalism itself.[44]

4.1.4 Definitions

Beyond essentialism, we may offer what can undoubtedly be labelled "definitions", whether we are considering the local or global context. Again, care must be taken to avoid collapsing, diminishing, or disguising the very complexities inherent in the terms such as *Pentecostal*, *Pentecostals*, *Pentecostalism,* and *Charismatic* and understanding

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[43] In what follows in the next section, the merits of such a designation are considered.

[44] In the contemporary context, the Australian Pentecostal Ministers Fellowship (APMF) alone comprises of numerous movements including, Apostolic Church Australia, Associated Christian Ministries, Four Square Gospel Church Australia, C3 Church, Australian Christian Churches (ACC), Vineyard Churches, Christian Church Australia, Life Churches Australia, and Victory Life Church to name but a few.

the diversity of meanings and associations attached to each.[45] As noted above, there are numerous opinions concerning the meaning of *Pentecostalism*.[46] Jacobsen states, "In a general sense, being Pentecostal means that one is committed to a Spirit-centred, miracle-affirming, praise-oriented version of Christian faith."[47] While this may be true, he further remarks, "The diverse versions of pentecostalism stand to some degree on their own, mutually criticizing each other and confirming each other in complex ways."[48] Whilst it is clear that the intended reference of the term Pentecostal is somewhat fluid, this thesis requires a working definition. For the most part, I use the capitalised form *Pentecostal* to refer to the movement's classical expression.[49] The un-capitalised form of *pentecostal* refers to the movement in general and includes its classical, charismatic, and neo-Pentecostal types.[50] *Pentecostal* is an identifier for a religious tradition within *Pentecostalism*, and it would be incorrect to refer to *Pentecostalism* as a tradition.[51] Therefore, I take the term *Pentecostalism* to represent a movement rather than a church or denomination. Furthermore, for the purpose of this thesis, I concur with Wolfgang

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[45] One must also be attentive to the use of the word *tradition,* as it is infused with meaning and significance. When considering the dictionary definition of tradition around the transmission of customs and beliefs, deciding which traditions are authentic and interpreting them can be challenging. Elke Murdock, *Multiculturalism, Identity and Difference: Experiences of Culture Contact* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 100. Many traditions often share common symbols and values that strengthen the feeling of belonging, which can lead to an idealisation of the past and even a perpetuated *invented* tradition. Ibid.

[46] For an overview of four prominent views see Vondey, *Beyond Pentecostalism*, 10–11.

[47] Douglas Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit: Theologies of the Early Pentecostal Movement* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2003), 12.

[48] Ibid.

[49] The term is more fully defined later in the chapter.

[50] Vondey, *Beyond Pentecostalism*, 11.. The term "Charismatic" means those who practice spiritual gifts in the older Catholic and Protestant denominations and "Neo-charismatic" includes all others, particularly independent churches. These terms will be further explored as the chapter unfolds.

[51] Allan Anderson, *To the Ends of the: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 5.

Vondey. He asserts that the many commonalities among *pentecostals* worldwide are a sufficient rationale to use the term *Pentecostalism* in its singular and capitalised form.[52]

4.2 Global Pentecostalism

From its somewhat modest beginnings, traditionally located at the turn of the twentieth century, Pentecostalism[53] has grown into a rapidly expanding global phenomenon and has established itself as one of the major movements within the Protestant tradition.[54] According to William Kay, the immediate roots of Pentecostalism are traced to the 19th century and within "revivalist Methodism, holiness offshoots of Methodism, Pietism, international missions, and protagonists of divine healing."[55] Today, Pentecostalism influences every dimension of Christianity. According to some, the growth is so remarkable that it would not be unusual to see Pentecostalism presented as a mode in its own right, alongside Catholicism and Protestantism.[56] Adherents of Pentecostalism also appear within categories of Protestant denominations within Christianity, alongside

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[52] Vondey, *Beyond Pentecostalism*, 12. Although it would be accurate to speak of Pentecostalisms in the contemporary global contexts.

[53] Referred to here as the global collective categories of the various expressions of the phenomenon.

[54] Vinson Synan, "The Pentecostal Century: An Overview," in *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal, 1901-2001*, ed. Vinson Synan (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 1. However, based on the extent of its diversity and local expression Allan Anderson cautions against referring to global Pentecostalism as a Christian "tradition". Allan Anderson et al., "Introduction," in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan Anderson et al. (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2010), 2.

[55] William K. Kay, *Pentecostalism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1. Frederick Dale Bruner acknowledges, "Methodism was the modern soil upon which Pentecostalism flourished.". Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 46–47.

[56] Anderson et al., "Introduction," 2. According to Anderson, "Pentecostalism can be viewed today as the most rapidly expanding religious movement in the world. Within the past thirty years, there has been an estimated 700 per cent increase in the number of Pentecostal believers, who represent about a quarter of the world's Christian population and two-thirds of all Protestants." Ibid.

Anglicans, Baptists, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, and others.[57] Each is institutionalised and has headquarters and associated colleges or Bible institutes. Typically, each is a generic category that encompasses several denominations as sub-categories. Although Pentecostal is not a descriptor of any clearly demarcated denomination, it is often viewed as such, particularly when considering Christianity by tradition.[58]

Many recognise Pentecostalism's worldwide significance based on the scale of its adherents, referring to it as the "third force in Christendom."[59] The numerical growth of Pentecostalism in its first century is well documented by David Barrett, who, in the year 2000, estimated Pentecostalism and its variants to have over 523 million adherents globally.[60] Despite its increasing popularity, Gina Zurlo et al. note that

> The movement has struggled, with many of its megachurches dominated by bold personalities, leading to problems with leadership in the second generation. Some have tried to keep control within biological families, often making the situation

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[57] See responses to religious affiliation for the 2016 Australian Census. https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/2071.02016?OpenDocument [Accessed 19th May 2020].

[58] Spittler, "Are Pentecostals and Charismatics Fundamentalists? A Review of American Uses of These Categories.," 105.

[59] James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-Examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Westminster Press, 1970), 2. Steven Land prefers the designation 'fourth force', alongside Roman Catholicism, Protestantism and Eastern Orthodox. Steven J Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Cleveland, Tennessee: CPT Press, 2010), 20.

[60] David B. Barrett, "Global Statistics," ed. Stanley M. Burgess, *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), 257. Cecil M. Robeck Jr., "Kilian McDonnell," ed. Stanley M. Burgess, *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), 287. This figure was calculated in the year 2000. It included all Christian denominations that share a Pentecostal style of spirituality or a broader Pentecostal renewal (charismatics in the mainline denominations and non-denomination churches, both Roman Catholic and Protestant). According to Vinson Synan, at the beginning of the year 2000, the group designated as "denominational Pentecostals" had grown to a membership in excess of 200 million. This figure makes it the second-largest denominational group of Christians, only to be surpassed by the Roman Catholics. Synan, "The Pentecostal Century: An Overview," 1–2.

worse. Lack of theological training is also a challenge for these rapidly expanding churches and networks.[61]

While leadership challenges exist, and the use of aggregate figures of the global movement is debatable based on the inclusion or exclusion of various groups and subgroups,[62] Pentecostalism's global and exponential expansion cannot be denied.[63] In mid-2021, Barrett's statistics were updated, recording over 656 million adherents.[64]

One may ask, "What is the reason for the unprecedented global expansion of Pentecostalism?" Allan Anderson offers a possible answer. He points to the missionary nature of the movement, which began among evangelicals anticipating a worldwide Holy Spirit revival in advance of the imminent return of Christ.[65] By 1916, western Pentecostal missionaries had reached at least forty-two nations beyond North America

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[61] Gina A. Zurlo, Todd M. Johnson, and Peter F. Crossing, "World Christianity and Mission 2021: Questions about the Future," *IBMR* 45, no. 1 (January 2021): 19.

[62] According to Michael Bergunder, "The most serious problem lies in the fact that a broad understanding of Pentecostalism refers neither to a common dogmatic basis nor to a common institutional framework (international umbrella organizations like the Pentecostal World Conference only cover parts of it)." Michael Bergunder, "The Cultural Turn," in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan Anderson et al. (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2010), 53.

[63] The Figures quoted by Barrett were subsequently adjusted to approximately 454 million adherents for the year 2000 by Gina A. Zurlo, Todd M. Johnson, and Peter F. Crossing, Gina A. Zurlo, Todd M. Johnson, and Peter F. Crossing, "Christianity 2019: What's Missing? A Call for Further Research," *IBMR* 43, no. 1 (January 2019): 96. It is important to note that the figures do not represent Classic Pentecostals only and include large movements within the African and Chinese independent churches and Catholic Charismatics, particularly in Latin America. It is within these three continents that the growth has predominantly occurred, although there is significant growth within North America, parts of Europe and Australia. Anderson et al., "Introduction," 1. Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 12. David B. Barrett, Todd M. Johnson, and Peter F. Crossing, "Christian World Communions: Five Overviews of Global Christianity, AD 1800-2025," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 33, no. 1 (2009): 32.

[64] Zurlo, Johnson, and Crossing, "World Christianity and Mission 2021," 18.

With an expectation that this figure would rise to 704 million by 2025. Ibid., 22. Michael Wilkinson estimate the 2025 figure at an even more staggering 826 million. Michael Wilkinson, "Pentecostal and the World: Theoretical and Methodological Issues for Studying Global Pentecostalism," *Pneuma* 38, no. 4 (2016): 383.

[65] Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 2.

and Europe.[66] As already noted, eschatological urgency within Pentecostalism's early days was the impetus behind its singular focus on an evangelistic mission.[67] Frank Macchia, too makes similar observations noting the Pentecostal drive towards eschatology focused on "the empowerment of the Spirit for faithful life and mission."[68] Within the Australian context, it is difficult to ascertain what preachers and evangelists were proclaiming during the first decade of the twentieth century, as there are limited sermon notes and no known recordings during this period. However, Chant offers an insight into the content and focus of Pentecostal preaching in Australia from his examination of over one thousand sermons and teaching articles published in three prominent Pentecostal journals between 1913 and 1939, the *Good News*, the *Australian Evangel*, and Apostolic journals *Revival Echoes* (changing its name to *Apostolic Herald* in 1936).[69] From his extensive research, Chant notes, "a study of the themes pursued in all three journals shows clearly the prominence of preaching on the second coming. Over one-fifth of the articles were devoted to this theme."[70] Iain MacRobert also notes an eschatological theme within the North American context. According to MacRobert, the movement was birthed as

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[66] Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2007), 288. According to Allan Anderson, "By the end of the [nineteenth] century, it had become predominantly a non-Western phenomenon…The largest pentecostal churches in the world are now found in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and on the eastern rim of Asia from Indonesia to Korea" Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 2. According to Néstor Medina, the growth is also related to "[Pentecostalisms] capacity to articulate itself through cultural elements of local cultural traditions. This characteristic has given the movement the impetus and dynamism to move across peoples, boundaries, cultures, knowledge, customs, and traditions." Néstor Medina, "Culture: Disruption, Accommodation, and Pneumatological Resignification," in *The Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology*, ed. Wolfgang Vondey (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2020), 112.

[67] Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, "Pentecostal Pneumatology of Religions: The Contribution of Pentecostals to Our Understanding of the Word of God's Spirit in the World," in *The Spirit in the World: Emerging Pentecostal Theologies in the Global Contexts*, ed. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 165–166.

[68] Frank D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2006), 275.

[69] Chant, *The Spirit of Pentecost: The Origins and Development of the Pentecostal Movement in Australia 1870-1939*, 301–305. *Revival Echoes* changed its name to *Apostolic Herald* in 1936. Ibid., 305.

[70] Chant, *The Spirit of Pentecost: The Origins and Development of the Pentecostal Movement in Australia 1870-1939*, 306.

lower socio-economic Whites [sic] were waiting for the second coming and Blacks [sic] were waiting to be freed from the harsh injustices of the society in which they found themselves.[71]

Furthermore, both groups sought deliverance from their oppressive situation during formation, promoting eschatological hope and emphasising the early revivals on conversion over religious instruction.[72] Macchia recognises escatology as integral to the Pentecostal message and Christians in general. He also highlights that today's traditional imperative regarding eschatology differs for all Pentecostals.[73] Although some have a sense of theological conviction that they are living in the last days, the intensity of eschatological urgency has diminished. Macchia agrees with this observation and notes it is most evident "among middle-class Pentecostals who are becoming increasingly comfortable with this world and are no longer living in the light of Christ's coming."[74]

While experiential spirituality is generally the common characteristic of global Pentecostalism, the challenge to further cohesion comes from the categories and sub-categories of Pentecostalism and the various traditions attached to the term itself. Despite being a relatively recent vintage, Pentecostalism's existence in diverse cultural contexts demonstrates its extraordinary adaptability, as noted by Archer below. It has rapidly matured and developed a wide variety of doctrines, rituals, and organisational

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[71] Iain MacRobert, *The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA* (London: Macmillan Press, 1988), 34.

[72] Ibid., 18.

[73] Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 272.

[74] Ibid.

structures to accommodate these many cultures.[75] According to Joel Robbins, Pentecostalism usually causes cultural change once it takes root in sufficient numbers.[76] He remarks, "One of the most notable findings in the anthropological literature on Pentecostalism is that the processes of cultural change it generates are similar across the world…despite the wide variety of local settings in which the religion lodges itself."[77]

Allan Anderson notes that while scholars seem to know what Pentecostalism means, it does incorporate an increasingly large variety of movements. He notes the following examples,

> the celibacy-practising Pentecostal Mission in India, the Saturday-Sabbath keeping and "Oneness" True Jesus Church in China, the uniform-wearing, highly ritualistic Zion Christian Church in Southern Africa, and Brazil's equally enormous, prosperity-oriented Universal Church of the Kingdom of God. These are lumped together with the Assemblies of God, the various Churches of God, the Roman Catholic Charismatic movement, "Neocharismatic" independent churches with prosperity and "Word of Faith" theologies, and the "Third Wave" evangelical movement with their use of spiritual gifts framed within a non-subsequence theology, and many other forms of Charismatic Christianity as diverse as Christianity itself.[78]

These examples indicate the vast array of churches within Pentecostalism globally, leading some to employ the plural term "Pentecostalisms" instead of the singular Pentecostalism.[79] Due to the diverse doctrines and theological practices, Vondey

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[75] Anderson et al., "Introduction," 1.

[76] Joel Robbins, "Anthropology of Religion," in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan Anderson et al. (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2010), 158.

[77] Ibid., 158–159.

[78]Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 4.

[79] Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2002), 89. Similarly, Ronald N. Bueno asks the question, "Is there a Pentecostal movement, or are there Pentecostalisms?" His question is the result of the conflict between his study of Pentecostalism and his local experience. He remarks, "the studies that I have read on Pentecostalism do not accord with or reflect my experience in El Salvador." Ma, "Biblical Studies in the Pentecostal Tradition: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," 269. Peter Hocken questions

recognises, "An ecclesiology acceptable to the conglomerate mass often ecclesiastically labelled as "Pentecostalisms," … is still in development."[80] From the outset, Pentecostalism was referred to as a movement rather than a church. However, the need for organisation and unity forced Pentecostals into denominational patterns and identities. While early Pentecostal pioneers opposed the concept of denominational models on the grounds of resisting what Vondey refers to as "the historical consciousness of the established ecclesiastical traditions"[81], the formation of denominational structures was inevitable. Although Cartledge does highlight the variety of independent and autonomous churches worldwide that do not affiliate themselves with broader pentecostal denominations, they do still, in some way, exhibit what might be considered pentecostal characteristics.[82] Therefore, while distinct traits may be observed, Pentecostalism's diversity makes constructing and delineating a precise definition of what is meant by 'Pentecostal' a complex and challenging task. Certainly, imposing, attributing, or employing a singular meaning that all can accept is risky. Some challenges are better understood if one considers "the story" or the movement's developments. As we begin to explore its history, to interpret and interrogate the same, one needs to be attentive to any scholar's specific agendas within the movement (and outside it) since it provides a particular lens on their reconstruction of history.

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the very use of the term' Pentecostalism' as an overarching descriptor of what he calls "all these forms of ecstatic experiential Spirit-shaped expressions of Christian faith." Peter Hocken, *The Challenges of the Pentecostal, Charismatic, and Messianic Jewish Movements: The Tensions of the Spirit* (Farnham, England: Ashgate Pub. Ltd, 2009), 14. He further remarks, "While the use of the plural form 'Pentecostalisms' recognizes to some degree the problems in pinning the same label on all these Spirit-shaped movements, it does not really resolve the terminological issue." Ibid., 14–15.

[80] Wolfgang Vondey, "Pentecostal Participation in Ecumenical Dialogues: Bilateral and Multilateral, Local and Global," in *Pentecostal Theology and Ecumenical Theology*, ed. Peter Hocken, Tony L. Richie, and Christopher Stephenson (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2019), 99.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Mark J. Cartledge, "Pentecostalism," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (Chichester, U.K.: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), 587.

4.2.1 Past is Not Passed

When we consider the question, "What is history?" E. H. Carr suggests that "our answer, consciously or unconsciously, reflects our own position in time, and forms a part of our answer to the broader question, [what is the] …view we take of the society in which we live."[83] As we consider what is presented as historical *fact*, we might assume they are the same for all historians. However, this does not mean the selection and arrangement of the various facts are not used to influence opinion.[84] Carr remarks, "It used to be said that facts speak for themselves. This is, of course, untrue."[85] The facts only *speak* if they are permitted to speak. The historian usually decides the order and context of the facts.[86] While there may be agreement regarding such things as dates or places where events may have taken place, any reading of the event invites, quite naturally and logically, a wide variety of interpretations. Indeed, to a varying degree, all historians are selective; hence, no objective past can be known as fact. Carr asserts that "historical facts existing objectively and independently of the interpretation of the historian is a preposterous fallacy, but one which is very hard to eradicate."[87]

Historians are products and inhabitants of a specific culture themselves. Whether they strive to be impartial and objective (or not), their writing is subject to the same rigorous

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[83] Edward Hallett Carr, *What Is History? The George Macaulay Trevelyan Lectures Delivered in the University of Cambridge, January-March 1961* (London: Penguin Books, 1987), 8.

[84] Ibid., 10–11.

[85] Ibid., 11.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid., 12.

explanation and treatments they impose on their materials and sources.[88] The Enlightenment ideal that we might somehow free ourselves of all unwanted influences and fashion some Cartesian-like distinction between the past and present, the foreign and familiar, is destined to remain unrealised.[89] This illusion of a historically neutralized standpoint is noted by Gadamer, who contends that we are a consciousness exposed to the effects of history (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein*).[90] According to Pol Vandevelde and Arun Iyer,

> The subject is a part of history and shaped by it while also in turn shaping history in the very process. Because the subject is historically situated, the subject's acts of understanding are always historical... This means that, instead of being timeless and unchangeable entities, objects are, first and foremost, revealed to the subject as objects only through history and tradition. As a consequence, it is not just the understanding that is historically mediated because of the subject's situatedness in history. The objects themselves are mediated by history and tradition.[91]

The critical issue is one of influence, conscious or unconscious, on our creative process. These influences or prejudices give us an overall sense of reality that ultimately informs the scope and depth of our understanding.[92] As discussed in the previous chapter, it is the notion of prejudices that Gadamer has in mind when he speaks of one's horizon. For

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[88] Ibid. Donald R. Kelly, *Fortunes of History: Historical Inquiry from Herder to Huizinga* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 334.

[89] Veith, *Gadamer and the Transmission of History*, 21–22.22.

[90] Gadamer, Weinsheimer, and Marshall, *Truth and Method*, 301. Gadamer remarks, "[W]irkungsgeschichtliches Bewufttsein) is primarily consciousness of the hermeneutical situation. To acquire an awareness of a situation is, however, always a task of peculiar difficulty. The very idea of a situation means that we are not standing outside it and hence are unable to have any objective knowledge." Ibid.

[91] Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Preface," in *Hermeneutics between History and Philosophy: The Selected Writings of Hans-Georg Gadamer. Volume 1*, ed. Pol Vandevelde and Arun Iyer, trans. Pol Vandevelde and Arun Iyer (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), xii–xiii.

[92] Veith, *Gadamer and the Transmission of History*, 22.

the historian, it becomes apparent that each "discloses a new horizon."[93] As new understanding occurs, horizons move and shift, much like the various prejudices that constitute them. Horizons result from a response to the world and, in a sense, are not our own.[94] Although we can become more aware of our horizon, Veith remarks that "one can never trace out the perimeter of what is enclosed by one's horizon, as its origin lies in a past beyond retrieval and in sources that are most certainly unfamiliar."[95] He also reminds us that history does not occur without us. It is mediated by those who take part in it, by those who document it, and by those who interpret it. Viewed in this way, tradition, the transmission of history, is the mediation itself. Hence, we are instrumental in perpetuating and preserving tradition.[96]

4.2.2 Priority of Testimony

While there is vast diversity within Pentecostalism, the common narrative of its tradition/s is essential in identifying, directing, and unifying current and future adherents.[97] According to Archer,

> The Pentecostal story is not a historical-critical retelling of an event, and it should not be confused as such; instead, it is more of an informed popular story developed through personal experiences of divine encounter, exegetical

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[93] Quote credited to George Sand, details unknown.

[94] Veith, *Gadamer and the Transmission of History*, 22.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Ibid., 26.

[97] Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 221.

appropriations of the Acts of the Apostles and the Gospels, and spiritual expectations among Pentecostal communities.[98]

Pentecostals are comfortable with the significance of subjective personal experience and the validation of story and testimony to appropriate meaning from the biblical text.[99] While testimonies find their origins in the stories of the biblical text, they are not a re-telling or a re-affirmation of an ancient account; instead, they are a continuation of the broader narrative.[100]

On an individual level, stories draw on socio-cultural backgrounds, family structures, and religious experiences.[101] The personal experiences of divine encounters and expectations are fashioned out of the formative stories in which they are embedded. The story of an individual evolves through interaction with a community and their beliefs.[102] For Pentecostals, these beliefs are based on a grand narrative of the biblical text, which provides what Archer describes as a "hermeneutical horizon" through which to view and interpret their own stories.[103] Now, the very idea of the biblical text forming a grand narrative is representative of a particular pre-conception. This is important as acknowledging pre-conceptions is integral to hermeneutics, a matter previously highlighted in chapter three. Testimony is an essential element in Pentecostal

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[98] Archer, "Pentecostal Theology as Story: Participating in God's Mission," 40–41.

[99] Ellington, "Scripture: Finding One's Place in God's Story," 70.

[100] Ibid., 71.

[101] Archer, "Pentecostal Theology as Story: Participating in God's Mission," 41.

[102] Ibid., 42.

[103] Ibid.

spirituality, through which the grand(er) narrative is often mediated.[104] According to

Archer, these testimonies construct a general foundational narrative into which "one's

own story can be integrated."[105] The recounting of a personal story in small group

settings highlights the ongoing interpersonal engagement of life in Christ, allowing for

reflection and contribution to the corporate testimony.[106] While there is certain vitality

in telling a story or sharing a 'testimony' in an oral form, a common practice in

Pentecostal Churches,[107] these experiences often become anecdotal. However, they are

intended to "exalt God and encourage the congregation"[108], Through the shared

experience, a sense of community is developed, and individuals are encouraged to trust

and seek God.[109] Smith observes,

> "I know that I know that I know" is a common refrain in pentecostal worship
> services that make room for testimony and witness. Furthermore, making room
> for testimony is central to pentecostal spirituality precisely because narrative is
> central to pentecostal identity.[110]

The significance of testimony is evident from the responses to the survey questionnaire

in chapter two[111]. Pamela Engelbert views the use of testimony within Pentecostalism as

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[104] This is also done through preaching and worship songs.

[105] Archer, "Pentecostal Theology as Story: Participating in God's Mission," 42.

[106] Jackie David Johns and Cheryl Bridges Johns, "Yielding to the Spirit: A Pentecostal Approach to Group Bible Study," in *Pentecostal Hermeneutics: A Reader*, ed. Lee Roy Martin (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013), 48.

[107] Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*, 23.

[108] Aldwin Ragoonath, *Preach the Word: A Pentecostal Approach* (Winnipeg: Agape Teaching Ministry of Canada, 2004), 40.

[109] Ibid.

[110] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*, 50.

[111] For the importance of sharing a testimony, the data across all respondents in the survey questionnaire indicated a mean of 6.56 (SD=2.0). See pages 48-49.

a way in which Pentecostals theologise.[112] According to Smith, "[It] captures the dynamic sense that God is active and present in our world and in our personal experience, while also emphasizing the *narrativity* of pentecostal spirituality"[113] as well as the immediacy of the biblical text. Simon Chan observes that Pentecostals have influenced the masses by using 'testimonies' of God working in their lives.[114] Within these testimonies, Stephen Land describes the force which pulls the testifier along as the "apocalyptic *telos*…the journey toward the kingdom of righteousness, holiness, and power."[115]

The testimony of God's power at work in a miraculous or providential event is often associated with healing. Candy Gunther Brown recognises divine healing practices as a part of pentecostal identity.[116] It is the practice of healing that draws many people to Pentecostalism.[117]According to Harvey Cox, "[T]he "making whole" of mind, body, and spirit…are not only integral, but they also often serve as the threshold through which new recruits pass into … the movement."[118] While priority is given to *positive*

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[112] Pamela F. Engelbert, *Who Is Present in Absence? A Pentecostal Theological Praxis of Suffering and Healing* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2019), 50. Smith remarks that "[O]ne might suggest that *memoir* is the consummate pentecostal theological genre. Or at the very least, something like testimony is integral to even pentecostal theorizing, even if this is not properly "academic"." Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*, xxii.

[113] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*, xxii.

[114] Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*, 20.

[115] Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 112.

[116] Candy Gunther Brown, "Introduction: Pentecostalism and the Globalization of Illness and Healing," in *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing*, ed. Candy Gunther Brown (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3. Brown notes, "The Pew survey singles out divine healing—more so than any other factor, including speaking in tongues and financial prosperity—as distinguishing Pentecostals and Charismatics from other Christians." Ibid.

[117] Harvey Cox, "Foreword," in *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing*, ed. Candy Gunther Brown (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), xviii.

[118] Ibid.

testimonies, those focusing on miracles and the power of God at work, Clifton notes, "[T]hose with permanent sickness, injury, and disability are given no opportunity to testify about their experience."[119] Based on research from NCLS, Clifton concludes, "people with disabilities do not feel comfortable attending pentecostal churches. There is something sadly ironic in a movement that intends to bring the healing power of Jesus to the "sick," and instead chases away those with disabilities."[120]

While accounts of healing within personal testimonies function to emphasise divine encounters, the testimony of God's power is also displayed in other ways, such as God's provision[121]as well as restoration in relationships. Estrelda Alexander recognises the repetition of specific themes and the liturgical patterns of testimonies, mainly when the sharing of testimonies is the focus of the service.[122] She remarks, "In a primarily oral tradition, oral means will be the primary carriers of the tradition. Certain rituals will become highly developed instruments for carrying out this function."[123]

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[119] Shane Clifton, "The Dark Side of Prayer for Healing," *Pneuma* 36, no. 2 (2014): 209. Clifton and Wells note, "This is particularly dire because public testimony is crucial for Pentecostal spirituality. Sitting outside of what is considered theologically normative, people with disabilities can be denied the opportunity to publicly share their ongoing lived experiences". Shane Clifton and Greta E.C. Wells, "Theology of Disability: The Spirit and Disabled Empowerment," in *The Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology*, ed. Wolfgang Vondey (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2020), 348.

[120] Clifton, "The Dark Side of Prayer for Healing," 215.

[121] In such things as employment, finances, and housing.

[122] Estrelda Y. Alexander, "Liturgy in Non-Liturgical Holiness-Pentecostalism," in *Pentecostal Ecclesiology: A Reader*, ed. Chris E. W. Green (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2016), 306.

[123] Ibid., 305. As with Albrecht, ritual here is taken to mean, "[T]hose actions, dramas, performances that a community creates, continues and recognizes as ways of behaving that express appropriateness given the situation." Daniel E. Albrecht, "Pentecostal Spirituality: Looking Through the Lens of Ritual," *Pneuma* 14, no. 1 (1992): 108.

As a part of the broader Pentecostal tradition, the theme of testimony builds the faith community by validating a religious experience.[124] Alexander notes, "These testimonies are not solo spiritual journeys the speaker details for detached spectators. Instead, the victory of the testifier becomes the victory of the congregation."[125] So while we can recognise the significance of testimony in the spiritual sense, as noted by Archer[126], it is also the sense of belonging to the community of believers, which is a crucial feature of testimony, as noted in chapter two.[127] Albrecht and Land also note this mutual participation in the Pentecostal ritual.[128] Land summarises the notion of a testimony where "[e]veryone listened, identified and responded in hopeful longing which served to sanctify and form them as a body of witnesses. Stories merged with *the* story."[129]

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[124] See Huber and Huber for social validation within the context of church attendance and the individual's needs to hear other believers' testimonies to validate religious experiences. Stefan Huber and Odilo W. Huber, "Psychology of Religion," in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan Anderson et al. (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2010), 150.

[125] Alexander, "Liturgy in Non-Liturgical Holiness-Pentecostalism," 307.

[126] Archer, "Pentecostal Theology as Story: Participating in God's Mission," 42.

[127] See page 48-49.

[128] Albrecht, "Pentecostal Spirituality," 114;123; Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 112. Albrecht notes that "[While] ritual is seen by many Pentecostals as too restrictive, potentially inhibiting the Spirit's moving and therefore not conducive to the spiritual experiences that Pentecostals often encourage as a part of their services and spiritual life…[Although], …Pentecostals do engage in rituals, though they call them by other names, e.g., "services," "practices," "distinctive"." Albrecht, "Pentecostal Spirituality," 108.

[129] Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 112. Also consider, in the context of Pentecostal worship, Jean-Daniel Plüss notes, "He suggests that testimony's function is to relate to the "cloud of witnesses" and to stress the unity within the Body of Christ, causing members to worship God in song or by clapping and encouraging those listening to it in their faith. His main work in the area, a published PhD. dissertation, offers theological, philosophical, and sociological analyses of Pentecostal testimony in the context of worship and advances a liturgical thesis of oral narratives as a bridge between secular and religious discourse." Jean-Daniel Plüss, *Therapeutic and Prophetic Narratives in Worship: A Hermeneutic Study of Testimonies and Visions: Their Potential Significance for Christian Worship and Secular Society* (Frankfurt: Verlag P. Lang, 1988).

4.2.3 The Azusa Street Tradition

In the North American context, Pentecostalism's origins as a denominational movement are traditionally traced back to a handful of individuals, most notably those of Charles Fox Parham and William Seymour during the 1906 Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles.[130] However, there is an ongoing debate about the origins of Pentecostalism, which challenges the traditional North American position.[131] Whether it is (again) to avoid the fallacy of origins thesis, Allan Anderson argues that there should be no attempt to restrict Pentecostalism's origins to the experiences of solitary individuals or the events of any one time. He argues for the recognition of the gradual development of global missionary work and several spontaneous revivals that occurred around the same time,[132] several of which predate the Azusa Street revival of 1906. Anderson offers

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[130] Synan describes revivals as spiritual awakenings which "bring new life and new converts into the churches." Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 153. See Stanley Howard Frodsham, *With Signs Following: The Story of the Pentecostal Revival in the Twentieth Century* (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing, 1941), 31–33. A second event situates Pentecostal origins in Cherokee County, North Carolina, in 1896. According to Synan, "the doctrine of entire sanctification reached the hill folk of western North Carolina… An unusual feature of this revival was the fact that several of those present who received sanctification reportedly spoke in other tongues." Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century*, 72; Frodsham, *With Signs Following: The Story of the Pentecostal Revival in the Twentieth Century*, 16–17. The third event is traced to a Bible school in Topeka, Kansas, in 1901, founded by Charles Fox Parham. Ibid., 19-23; Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 24. For a related discussion, see Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 25–35.

[131] It is not the purpose of this thesis to present a detailed discussion on the ongoing debate of Pentecostal origins. However, it is apparent, as Grey notes, that ongoing attempts by scholars to determine "a single "birthplace" of Pentecostalism…is unnecessary when understood as a diverse and complex movement." Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 24 n.57. For more on this debate, see Augustus Cerillo Jr., "Interpretive Approaches to the History of American Pentecostal Origins," *Pneuma* 19, no. 1 (1997): 29-49; Walter J. Hollenweger, "The Black Roots of Pentecostalism," in *Pentecostals after a Century: Global Perspectives on a Movement in Transition,* ed. Allan Anderson and Walter J. Hollenweger (Sheffield, U.K.: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 33-44; Dale T. Irvin, "Pentecostal Historiography and Global Christianity: Rethinking the Questions of Origins," *Pneuma* 27, no. 1 (2005): 35–50. For a further discussion on the Cherokee account versus Azusa Street claim, see Harold Hunter, "Spirit-Baptism and the 1896 Revival in Cherokee County, North Carolina," *Pneuma* 5, no. 2 (1983): 1–17. For a discussion on the roles of the early revival of Pentecostalism, see Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 35–38.

[132] Bergunder, "The Cultural Turn," 60.

several examples of earlier revivals, such as the Korean revival in Pyongyang in 1903, which rapidly spread to thousands of Koreans and influenced revivals in China, the Welsh revival in 1904-5, and the Indian revival between 1905-7 in Poona[133], to name but a few.[134]

Numerous other indigenous revivals globally caused what became known as Pentecostalism to spread rapidly. These Pentecostal revivals were initiated within their specific context and were not imports from the western world to 'foreign lands' as is often believed.[135] This belief in the spread or "diffusion" of these early revivals relates to an early anthropological debate concerning "The Occurrence of Similar Inventions in Areas Widely Apart.", the title of an article from 1887 by Franz Boas, whereby an early and dominant diffusionist ideal is corrected.[136] It was during the traditional beginnings

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[133] According to Anderson, the Mukti Mission in Kedgaon, India, commenced a year before the events at Azusa Street. He notes that, "hundreds of young Indian women said to be "baptized by the Spirit" in prayer meetings saw visions, fell into trances, and spoke in tongues. The Mukti revival was as much a center of pilgrimage for propagating the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism as Azusa Street was." Allan Anderson, "Spreading Fires: The Globalization of Pentecostalism in the Twentieth Century," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 31, no. 1 (January 2007): 8. Stanley Burgess acknowledges that while many historians have traditionally placed the origins of the Pentecostal movement in Topeka, Kansas, in 1901, this, in reality, is not the case. He further notes that it has been convincingly established by scholarship that Pentecostal *outpourings* occurred well before the 20th century in several parts of the world, most notably in Africa, England, Finland, Russia, India, and Latin America. Stanley M. Burgess, "Introduction," ed. Stanley M. Burgess, *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), xvii.

[134] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 172-173; Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 88. There were also revivals in several regions of Asia, Africa and Latin America. However, they did not directly relate to the North American context.

[135] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 175.

[136] Franz Boas, "The Occurrence of Similar Inventions in Areas Widely Apart," *Science* 9, no. 224 (May 20, 1887): 485–486. According to Eriksen, "Diffusionists studied the geographical distribution and migration of cultural traits, and posited that cultures were patchworks of traits with various origins and histories." Thomas Hylland Eriksen and Finn Sivert Nielsen, *A History of Anthropology* (London: Pluto Press, 2001), 27.

of Pentecostalism that diffusionism was fashionable.[137] According to McClymond, "Since the original Pentecost event *began in one place* and then *diffused in concentric circles…*would not the new Pentecost occur in a comparable way?"[138] He bases this on what is suggested by Acts 1:8. The first location mentioned is Jerusalem, followed by Judah and Samaria, concluding with the end of the earth.[139]

Adam Stewart suggests that the first Pentecostal event, where the diverse believers gathered, sets up a typological ideal that dominated early Pentecostal thinking about the Azusa Street revival and its dominance as the birthplace of Pentecostalism.[140] Working within a pre-existing dispensationalist paradigm, early Pentecostals, according to Stewart, "were primed to isolate a single location where they believed the Spirit fell, was confirmed by the presence of glossolalia, and was subsequently transmitted throughout the world in a concentric, unidirectional movement imitating the narrative presented in the New Testament."[141]

Despite the challenges to Azusa Street's origin claims, its significance is not denied. Grey notes that "the Azusa Street event acts as a "*symbol* or organizing principle for

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[137] Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Engaging Anthropology: The Case for a Public Presence* (Oxford ; New York: Berg, 2006), 60. When considering a single cultural item such as religious beliefs and practices, it is not easy to demonstrate whether or not similarities are due to diffusion. Ibid.

[138] Michael McClymond, "I Will Pour Out of My Spirit Upon All Flesh": An Historical and Theological Meditation on Pentecostal Origins," *Pneuma* 37 (2015): 362.

[139] Ibid.

[140] Adam Stewart, "From Monogenesis to Polygenesis in Pentecostal Origins: A Survey of the Evidence from the Azusa Street, Hebden, and Mukti Missions," *PentecoStudies* 13 (2014): 168–170.

[141] Ibid., 169.

global Pentecostalism."[142] Similarly, Wilkinson[143] also highlights the significance of Azusa Street in establishing Pentecostalism.[144] He argues that "while there is a variety of "Pentecostalisms" worldwide, there is also something of an Azusa-*ization* process whereby all Pentecostal currents are influenced directly or indirectly, by this one event."[145] Stewart makes a similar point while supporting polygenesis. He notes "early centres of the movement that played especially important—and, in the case of Azusa Street, even predominant—roles in spreading the revival."[146]

Australian historian Mark Hutchinson opposes the shift of Azusa Street's role from being "*the* Pentecostal outbreak" to being "symbolic".[147] He states,

> It is often we colonials (either of the British Empire or the American) who are at fault for this – undermining the canonicity of Azusa Street often seems like a logical place to begin in reconstructing other national stories. For others, the symbolic nature of Azusa provides a convenient source of shorthand statement that conflates the huge mass of historical data into readily useable theological maxims.[148]

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[142] Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 24. Italics are in original.

[143] Wilkinson is writing from the Canadian perspective.

[144] Michael Wilkinson, "Introduction," in *Canadian Pentecostalism: Transition and Transformation*, ed. Michael Wilkinson (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), 3.

[145] Ibid.

[146] Stewart, "From Monogenesis to Polygenesis in Pentecostal Origins: A Survey of the Evidence from the Azusa Street, Hebden, and Mukti Missions," 160–161. Stewart establishes that the Mukti revival in India and the Hebden revival in Toronto did not originate or are in any way connected to the Azusa Street revival in North America. Ibid., 154–168.

[147] Mark Hutchinson, "From Corner Shop to Boutique Franchise: The Dilemmas of Australian Pentecostalism," in *Global Renewal Christianity: Spirit-Empowered Movements Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Vinson Synan and Amos Yong, vol. 1: Asia and Oceania (Florida: Charisma House Books, 2016), 316.

[148] Ibid., For Hutchinson, reading Azusa Street as symbolic is, at worst, an excuse to ignore historical literature or perhaps not to read it in any depth. Ibid.

When one considers the worldwide revivals during the same period, the *birth* of Pentecostalism takes on a distinct global character. Perhaps a case can be made for Azusa Street's necessity as an Archimedean point, a place from which to stand so that all things can be seen.[149]

Recalling the earlier discussion in this chapter regarding categories, it may be said that the ability to perceive differences between members of apparently contrasting categories can help unpack the complexities of the Pentecostal movement in general or within a specific tradition by considering how categories are proposed, propagated, imposed, and institutionalised.[150] According to Rogers Brubaker, when categories become institutionalised, they can become entrenched in "culturally powerful and symbolically resonant myths, memories and narratives"[151]. Some are malleable enough to allow different writers to strengthen a specific partisan identity boundary.[152] Hence, it is possible to have a specific interpretation of a myth of origins that becomes institutionalised as a collective memory,[153] creating a shared bond. The interpretation can result from reframing a myth of origins, such that it functions as a mirror that reflects on itself and its context.[154]

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[149] Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 101.

[150] Brubaker, "Ethnicity without Groups," 170.

[151] Ibid., 169.

[152] Kubal, *Cultural Movements and Collective Memory*, 25.

[153] Ibid., 32.

[154] Ibid., 43.

The strength of any myth of origin is often perpetuated as a function of a claim. One that suggests something exceptional had occurred or that the origin is exceptional. It can also be perpetuated not as a result of what has occurred but rather by what has been done with what occurred. The strength of these *symbols* lies in their pliability. Essentially the symbol grows, morphs, and adjusts to meet people's various needs and interests. As such, the myth of origins can powerfully pre-determine the practice of a tradition.[155] For Pentecostals, whether functioning as a type of metanarrative or not, to hold a view of a common origin may be accepted as it is believed to be a historical fact. However, searching for the supposed *fons et origo* of a movement risks the so-called fallacy, that is, the "Myth of Origins": one that reminds us that discovering the origin does not necessarily provide the interpretive key to any normative understanding of the tradition.

Even if that Archimedean point is established on what might emerge as a falsehood, I am inclined to agree with Kärkkäinen, who regards "the origins of Pentecostalism as a sovereign work of God that cannot be traced to any single leader or group but should rather be attributed to a spontaneous and simultaneous outpouring of the Holy Spirit around the world."[156] In this way, the approach to Pentecostalism's origins are best understood as "polycentric",[157] as described by Allan Anderson, where many centres of Pentecostalism grew and spread across the globe with elements of cross-pollination between the various early pioneers. The diffusionist thesis mentioned earlier is a

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[155] Ronald Hendel, "Mind the Gap: Modern and Postmodern in Biblical Studies," *JBL* 133, no. 2 (2014): 441. Stephen D. Moore, "The 'Post-' Age Stamp: Does It Stick?: Biblical Studies and the Postmodernism Debate," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 57, no. 3 (1989): 547.

[156] Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 88.

[157] Allan Anderson, "Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions," in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan Anderson et al. (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2010), 25.

reminder that a single site of origin is not needed to explain the spread. However, one does recognise the power of the story of such a singular origin.

4.2.4 Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Whichever view one holds regarding the origins of the movement, at the turn of the twentieth century, 'Pentecostal' was a term that sought to identify someone who had experienced Baptism in the Holy Spirit, evidenced by the associated charismatic or spiritual gifts (1 Cor.12:8-10). Pentecostals often describe the experience of Baptism in the Holy Spirit as one that causes a lasting and permanent change in their faith and character.[158] According to Jacobsen, it creates "a radically deepened awareness of God's presence in their lives, and of a new sense of empowerment for ministry that does not fade with time."[159] For Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, it is "Spirituality, rather than theology/creeds or sociology of religion, which is the key to understanding Pentecostalism."[160] Jacobsen asserts that there is a consensus that Baptism in the Holy Spirit itself is "a distinct and unique inflowing of the Spirit of God that powerfully changes a person who experiences it."[161] Macchia describes this Spirit indwelling as "the crown jewel of the Pentecostal message…For [whom]…the *finitum capax infiniti* is located centrally in the human heart and the communal interaction of gifted lives that

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[158] Douglas Jacobsen, "Introduction: The History and Significance of Early Pentecostal Theology," in *A Reader in Pentecostal Theology: Voices from the First Generation*, ed. Douglas Jacobsen (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2006), 4.

[159] Ibid.

[160] Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, "Pneumatologies in Systematic Theology," in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan Anderson et al. (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2010), 224.

[161] Jacobsen, "Introduction: The History and Significance of Early Pentecostal Theology," 3.

have become channels of the Spirit's presence to one another."[162] The unique teaching of the Pentecostals stressed that it was normative for those baptised in the Holy Spirit to receive gifts of the Spirit (or charismata) as a part of the experience. According to Macchia, the emphasis on the experience "was part of a deeply held restorationist impulse: the goal was to recapture the powerful primitive church depicted in the New Testament."[163] The dominant element of the term "Pentecostal" in this context is that of power. For Pentecostals, the Holy Spirit is restoring to the Church the same power described on the day of Pentecost.[164]

In the book of Acts, we read:

> When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.
>
> Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.
>
> They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.
>
> All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.[165]

It is from an interpretation and, importantly, an application of these events that Pentecostalism ultimately adopts its name.[166] Kay notes, "The account contains a series of themes and motifs that will recur as Pentecostalism unfolds across the 20th

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[162] Frank D. Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit: Creation, Redemption, and the Triune God* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2010), 76–78.

[163] Frank D. Macchia, "Spirit Baptism: Initiation in the Fullness of God's Promises," in *The Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology*, ed. Wolfgang Vondey (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2020), 247.

[164] Hocken, *The Challenges of the Pentecostal, Charismatic, and Messianic Jewish Movements*, 4.

[165] Acts 2:1-4, *The Holy Bible*, Today's New International Version (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005).

[166] Kay, *Pentecostalism: A Very Short Introduction*, 3.

century."[167] Most notably, based on the experience of speaking in tongues (glossolalia[168]), Pentecostals claimed a direct link with the first-century experience described in Acts 2. Glossolalia is a distinct testimony of the Pentecostal Movement, one that has become a marker for an early Pentecostal conversion experience. For Pentecostals today, the pneumatic experience of speaking in tongues is a Spirit-inspired ability that makes them different from other Christian traditions.[169] "When early Pentecostals claimed they were experiencing glossolalia, they believed they had been given the gift of missionary tongues to facilitate the great end-time revival".[170] However, recent studies show that the contemporary practice of glossolalia is typically a private affair, reserved to empower for personal Bible study rather than missions.[171]

Pentecostals continue to believe in a reoccurring experience of Pentecost for all believers. This experience constitutes the very core of Pentecostalism. According to

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[167] Ibid.

[168] According to Douglass Jacobsen, "To outside observers, speaking in tongues can sound like nonsensical babbling, and supporting that view, linguists have never been able to decipher any underlying grammatical structure when studying examples of recorded glossolalia. But pentecostal believers are convinced that speaking in tongues is a special form of communication inspired by God, and they derive profound meaning from the experience. Even if speaking in tongues is not a language in any usual sense of the term, something significant occurs when people engage in it." Jacobsen, "Introduction: The History and Significance of Early Pentecostal Theology," 3.

[169] Ibid. Machia notes that "Speaking with tongues was a prominent sign of the Spirit's reception in Acts 2:4 and provided the physical (observable) link to the experience of the Spirit by the gentiles in Acts 10:46 and 19:6. The desire to focus on tongues rather than water baptism as the physical link among different communities in their reception of the Spirit (e.g. Acts 2:38, 10:47, 19:5) reveals the Pentecostal penchant to look for charismatic signs rather than sacred rites to confirm spiritual experience." Macchia, "Spirit Baptism: Initiation in the Fullness of God's Promises," 248. For ecumenical responses to Pentecostals on Baptism in the Holy Spirit, see Kilian McDonnell, *The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan: The Trinitarian and Cosmic Order of Salvation* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1996).; Kilian McDonnell and George T. Montague, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit: Evidence from the First Eight Centuries* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1994).; Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*.

[170] Janet Evert Powers, "Missionary Tongues?" *JPT* 17 (2000): 40.

[171] Matthias Wenk, "Spiritual Gifts: Manifestations of the Kingdom of God," in *The Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology*, ed. Wolfgang Vondey (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2020), 304.

Jacobsen, Pentecostals have a Spirit-centred faith and "belief in the present-day power of the Holy Spirit to work miracles and supernaturally change lives… [They] sense the Spirit more intensely, and they expect the Spirit to act more visibly and dramatically."[172] While many Christians consider the supernatural experience extremely atypical, Pentecostals, possibly more than any other Christian tradition, have actively sought this experience[173] with the uplifting and powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit in the miraculous realm. Pentecostals have, as Davies notes, "believed, prayed and worked in the Spirit's power."[174]

Beyond glossolalia, Pentecostals identified with the outpouring of the Spirit manifested in the spiritual gifts of prophecy and healing, consistent with the early chapters of the book of Acts.[175] *Pentecostal* did not indicate a particular teaching or church practice but rather a focus on a new Pentecost experience.[176] The post-conversion experience was emphasised by earlier movements in the nineteenth century, particularly the "Holiness and Higher Life (Keswick) movements in England and [North] America. These movements stressed "second blessing" sanctification and Baptism in the Holy Spirit as

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[172] Jacobsen, "Introduction: The History and Significance of Early Pentecostal Theology," 3.

[173] Although these experiences or 'gifts' were uncommon beyond the first century CE, they re-emerge on occasion over the centuries. One prominent example is the charismatic and prophetic movement of the second century Montanists, a designation resulting from the movement's leader, Montanus, a convert to Christianity. According to Steve Fanning, "At his baptism, Montanus was seized by the Holy Spirit…and began speaking in tongues and prophesying" The movement grew as it was joined by those who had a similar experience. Montanists were considered heretical by mainstream Christianity. The anti-Montanists Christians believed that "Christianity no longer experienced possession by the Holy Spirit as a normative feature of faith." Steven Fanning, *Mystics of the Christian Tradition* (London: Routledge, 2001), 20.

[174] Andrew Davies, "What Does It Mean to Read the Bible as a Pentecostal?," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 18, no. 2 (2009): 218.

[175] Ibid. Although the designation was "not retained by those Holiness groups that had called themselves Pentecostal in the closing decades of the nineteenth century." Ibid.

[176] Hocken, *The Challenges of the Pentecostal, Charismatic, and Messianic Jewish Movements*, 4.

an endowment of power for service."[177] According to Archer, it was here within the holiness movements that Pentecostalism finds its roots[178], specifically, the Wesleyan Holiness and Keswickian higher life movement. This association explains why John Wesley is described as "the spiritual and intellectual father of the modern holiness and Pentecostal movement."[179] Both holiness movements were committed to the idea that conversion ought to be followed by this "second blessing", which was an experience related to Christian perfection or sanctification, which dealt with original sin.[180] Barry Chant notes,

> It was the Wesleyan emphasis on Christian Perfection and baptism in the Holy Spirit that formed the fertile seedbed for Pentecostalism. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, prominent Wesleyan leaders…were calling for a return to perfectionism and what they called a 'Pentecostal baptism in the Spirit' among Methodists.[181]

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[177] Vinson Synan, "Classic Pentecostalism," ed. Stanley M. Burgess, *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), 553.

[178] Kenneth J. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century: Spirit Scripture and Community* (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 14.

[179] Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century*, 1.

[180] In his work *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, Wesley gave a précis of his view, he states, "An instantaneous change has been wrought in some believers: None can deny this. Since that change, they enjoy perfect love; they feel this, and this alone; they "rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks." Now, this is all that I mean by perfection; therefore, these are witnesses of perfection which I preach. "But in some this change was not instantaneous." They did not perceive the instant when it was wrought. It is often difficult to perceive when a man dies, yet there is an instant in which life ceases. And if ever sin ceases, there must be a last moment of its existence, and a first moment of our deliverance from it." John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1925), 168–169.

[181] Barry Chant, *The Spirit of Pentecost: The Origins and Development of the Pentecostal Movement in Australia 1870-1939* (Lexington, Kentucky: Emeth Press, 2011), 3.

The developing history of the Pentecostal movement and the language of Baptism in the Holy Spirit is also, in part, traceable to John Fletcher[182] and Charles Finney[183], along with the experience of glossolalia that can be found throughout the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition. However, the Pentecostals made "the theological connection between Spirit-baptism… and glossolalia and their placement as an "initial physical evidence" of Spirit-baptism."[184] While we can recognise some of the antecedents to Pentecostalism during the mid to late nineteenth century and the formation of denominational structures in the early twentieth century, it is not until after World War II, according to Grey, that we see "Pentecostalism in Northern America [begin]… to merge with dominant Evangelicalism for the verbalization of their doctrinal position."[185] Interestingly, this merging with Evangelicalism would result in a dependency that would become a means of validating the emerging Pentecostal movement, which will be discussed in chapter five of this thesis. Within a decade or so of the post-war years, as the Spirit experience began to emerge in mainline denominations, we see an increased emphasis on categorising the various Pentecostal *brands* based on marked differences structurally, sociologically, and theologically.[186]

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[182] Dale M. Coulter, "Sanctification: Becoming an Icon of the Spirit through Holy Love," in *The Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology*, ed. Wolfgang Vondey (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2020), 238. Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2011), 150.

[183] Other prominent advocates included Phoebe Palmer, William and Catherine Booth, and William Taylor. Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 15.

[184] Simon Chan, "Tradition: Retrieving and Updating Pentecostal Core Beliefs," in *The Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology*, ed. Wolfgang Vondey (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2020), 98.

[185] Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 25.

[186] Ibid.

4.2.5 Pentecostal Taxonomy

Over the last century, Pentecostalism has transformed from its diverse and diffuse origins into several more clearly defined categories. One such category is "Classical Pentecostalism".[187] Although the term was first coined in 1968 by one of the foremost scholars of the Catholic charismatic movement, Kilian McDonnell,[188] it did not come into widespread usage in Pentecostal scholarship until the 1970s, when there was a need for self-definition as the various *pentecostal* groups began to form and develop.[189] McDonnell employed the term together with "neo-Pentecostal" to make a distinction between pentecostal groups, or what is sometimes referred to as 'waves'. According to Barrett, in the 20th century, the Pentecostal/charismatic renewal in the Holy Spirit "arrived in three distinct and separate surges or explosions, sufficiently distinct for us to label them the first wave (the Pentecostal renewal [or Classical Pentecostals]), the second wave (charismatic renewal), and the third wave (the neo-charismatic renewal [or Neo-Pentecostals])."[190]

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[187] Allan Anderson notes other sub-categories alongside Classical Pentecostalism as Older Church Charismatics (including Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox, and various Protestant Charismatics), Older Independent Churches and Neo-Pentecostal or Neo-Charismatic Churches. Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 5–6. The focus here will be on Classical Pentecostals, and other sub-categories will be discussed as they intersect. For further on sub-categories, see Ibid., 4–10.

[188] Robeck Jr., "Kilian McDonnell," 853; Kilian McDonnell, "Holy Spirit and Pentecostalism," *Commonweal* 89 (November 8, 1968): 198–204.

[189] Aaron T. Friesen, *Norming the Abnormal: The Development and Function of the Doctrine of Initial Evidence in Classical Pentecostalism* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2013), 1; 129.

[190] David B. Barrett, "The Worldwide Holy Spirit Renewal," in *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal, 1901-2001*, ed. Vinson Synan (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 381. Allan Anderson notes, "[A]s a term to cover global events, "Third Wave" is inappropriate and misleading. Even in the North American context, it overlooks the JPM [Jesus People Movement] and the much earlier Latter Rain movement." Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 217.

While it is acknowledged that the notion of "waves" for such distinction is contentious, it is used here as a heuristic device to organise and comprehend historical development.[191].[192] The first group, Classical Pentecostals, is recognised as the traditional form and comprises those Pentecostal denominations which formed or had origins in the first three decades of the twentieth century.[193] The second group, Charismatic Renewal or Charismatics, emerged around 1955 and comprised historic churches such as Episcopal, Presbyterian, Lutheran, and Catholic.[194] The third group, "Neo-Pentecostals", emerged a decade or so later.[195]

It seems ironic that categories were needed since the early Pentecostals wished to create unity and cohesion in what they viewed as a hitherto divided Christianity.[196] Later,

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[191] Mark Hutchinson opposes the use of *waves* in these contexts and argues that "[S]cholars conflate a mass of very complex, local-global interactions into simplistic categories… [T]here are marked effects from the adoption of such underlying paradigms: it silences and glosses over bodies of experience and data, it legitimizes the imposition of particular theologies and politics, and it "organizes" the poor and marginalized in ways that disrespect their agency and authenticity. Fundamentally, it misrepresents the nature of the charismatic experience by facilitating its co-option into reified categories." Mark Hutchinson, "The Problem with 'Waves': Mapping Charismatic Potential in Italian Protestantism 1890–1929," *Pneuma* 39, no. 1 (2017): 53.

[192] Mark Hutchinson opposes the use of *waves* in these contexts and argues that "scholars conflate a mass of very complex, local-global interactions into simplistic categories… [T]here are marked effects from the adoption of such underlying paradigms: it silences and glosses over bodies of experience and data, it legitimizes the imposition of particular theologies and politics, and it "organizes" the poor and marginalized in ways that disrespect their agency and authenticity. Fundamentally, it misrepresents the nature of the charismatic experience by facilitating its co-option into reified categories." Ibid.

[193] Although it is worth noting that Allan Anderson identified exponents of and adherents to the religious tradition that began to emerge within the first decade of the twentieth century, during which time they were simply referred to as "Pentecostals". Anderson, "Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions," 25. Based on theological differences, Anderson further divides Classical Pentecostals into Holiness Pentecostals, "Finished Work" Pentecostals, Oneness Pentecostals, and Apostolic Pentecostals. Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 6.

[194] Friesen, *Norming the Abnormal: The Development and Function of the Doctrine of Initial Evidence in Classical Pentecostalism*, 1.

[195] Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century*, 283. Richard Quebedeaux, *The New Charismatics: The Origins, Development, and Significance of Neo-Pentecostals* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1976), 4.

[196] Walter J. Hollenweger, "Crucial Issues for Pentecostals," in *Pentecostals after a Century: Global Perspectives on a Movement in Transition,* ed. Allan Anderson and Walter J. Hollenweger (Sheffield, U.K.: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 186–187.

focusing on the various Church traditions and their different creeds, Hollenweger bemoans the "loss of the ecumenical vision"[197]. For Classical Pentecostals of the first generation, the only creed they had was the Bible, and the only leader they needed was the Holy Spirit.[198] Significantly, pre-conceptions regarding the role of the Bible and the Holy Spirit seemingly developed as a reaction to Pentecostals' specific context. According to Grey, "The Bible was considered a book of truth and facts, which the community must only believe and apply."[199] Upon this pre-conception of the biblical text, the application typically focused on the literal and plain message of the text. Perhaps, as previously noted, there is an apparent fondness for literalism found in Pentecostal preaching. In their contemporary context, the *truth* of the biblical text contained within it the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit, which included the manifestation of spiritual gifts and miracles.[200] Broadly speaking, it would be difficult to call a person Pentecostal if their emphasis were not on the experience of the Holy Spirit and the practice of spiritual gifts. Grey remarks, "Just as God had spoken in the past through the biblical authors, God continued to speak through both Scripture and inspired speech to the community of their day"[201].

Over the years, Pentecostals have focused on the experience of glossolalia as a specific way of practising spiritual gifts. As discussed above, glossolalia was understood by early Pentecostals as an experience that directly linked them with the events described in Acts

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[197] Ibid., 186.

[198] See Edith L. Blumhofer, "Restoration as Revival: Early American Pentecostalism," in *Modern Christian Revivals*, ed. Edith L. Blumhofer and Randall Palmer (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 148–150.

[199] Grey, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture with Spirit in Community," 129.

[200] Ibid.

[201] Ibid.

2. Again, the pre-conceptions regarding a grand biblical narrative and the Pentecostal's place in that narrative surface. Not only is the experience considered to be normative, but one that sets them apart.[202] Hence, the doctrine of initial evidence has come to define classical Pentecostalism[203], for whom a definition of Baptism in the Spirit, according to David Perry, "would usually contain reference to an event that is "distinct from and subsequent to" conversion, with tongues or glossolalia providing the initial evidence that this baptism has been received."[204] Although, as Perry points out, modern Pentecostal scholars would challenge such a definition, principally on the grounds of subsequent and initial evidence.[205] Friesen suggests that the retreat from this defining doctrine within academia reveals what is happening at a Pentecostal congregational level.[206] He notes, "Empirical evidence suggests that there is an increasing gap between the beliefs of denominational leaders and pastors and the beliefs of laypeople concerning

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[202] Friesen, *Norming the Abnormal: The Development and Function of the Doctrine of Initial Evidence in Classical Pentecostalism*, 15.

[203] Although beyond North America, the doctrine of initial evidence has less of a focus and is not readily accepted by many Pentecostals. However, the experience of glossolalia is still widely seen. According to Friesen, "Glossolalia has an appeal to global Pentecostals because of its ecumenically constructive trajectory. A rigid doctrine of initial evidence is understood as divisive, formulaic and constraining, whereas an experience of speaking in tongues is viewed as unifying, barrier crossing, and empowering in the context of diversity." Ibid.

[204] David Perry, *Spirit Baptism: The Pentecostal Experience in Theological Focus* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2017), 6. Synan notes, "This teaching was based on the fact that tongues appeared as the Spirit was poured out in the early church in Acts 2, 10, and 19 and were implicit in Acts 8 and 9…Along with the manifestation of tongues as evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the Pentecostals also emphasized divine healing …for modern believers. Pentecostals also taught that all the other gifts of the Spirit had likewise been restored to the church." Synan, "Classic Pentecostalism," 553. "The effect of this doctrine was to deny the "cessation of the charismata" teaching that had been the accepted understanding of the Western churches since the days of Augustine. The cessation view held that the charismata had been withdrawn from the church at the end of the apostolic age. Classical [P]entecostalism thus forced the church to re-examine this position in the light of the many claims it made for current manifestations of gifts." Ibid.

[205] Perry, *Spirit Baptism: The Pentecostal Experience in Theological Focus*, 6. According to The doctrine itself is criticised by "Pentecostals whose identity and self-definition are no longer intimately tied to the results of such a debate" Friesen, *Norming the Abnormal: The Development and Function of the Doctrine of Initial Evidence in Classical Pentecostalism*, 2.

[206] Friesen, *Norming the Abnormal: The Development and Function of the Doctrine of Initial Evidence in Classical Pentecostalism*, 2.

the doctrine of initial evidence in "classical" Pentecostal churches."[207] However, early Classical Pentecostals understood their Christian belief, practice, and experience as very distinct from any other form of Christianity; there was no confusion in their minds.[208] The boundary between Pentecostals and other forms of the Christian faith was quite apparent and very real to them. As Jacobsen notes,

> Fuzziness was simply not part of the picture. Pentecostals who possessed this kind of clear-boundary-line vision of the movement [the majority of pentecostal believers did] …might not have agreed with all their pentecostal colleagues about precisely where that boundary line should be drawn, but they were adamant that such a line existed. They were convinced that the boundaries of pentecostal identity needed to be patrolled and protected from anyone and everyone who might try to blur the defining edges.[209]

As noted above, to maintain this *boundary,* the term "Classical Pentecostalism" was employed to distinguish "Old" Pentecostalism from the emerging "New" Pentecostalism or the Charismatic Renewal and Neo-Pentecostalism. These new categories, the "Charismatics" or "Charismatic Renewal", blurred the *boundary line.* The many shared features between what is understood by the terms "Pentecostal" and "Charismatic" are often used interchangeably. Even experts occasionally find it difficult to determine a clear boundary.[210]

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[207] Ibid. See Margaret Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads, Charisma and Institutional Dilemmas* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 39-40; William K. Kay, *Pentecostals in Britain* (Carlisle, U.K.: Paternoster, 2000), 72–81.

[208] Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit*, 286; Burgess, "Introduction," xix. In the North American context rather than "diverse" origins suggested earlier

[209] Burgess, "Introduction," xix.

[210] Ibid., xviii.

While early Pentecostals were usually individuals of a lower socioeconomic standing, those within the historic mainline churches were more affluent. There was a desire for spiritual renewal within these churches, which resulted in an increased interest in spiritual gifts. It is from these mainline churches that "Charismatics" emerged.[211] McClymond remarks, "Mainline Charismatics have often found early Pentecostalism to be rude and unsophisticated, and they interpret charismatic renewal as a necessary corrective."[212] Charismatics emphasised many of the doctrines and practices of Classical Pentecostals. These included Baptism in the Holy Spirit and even speaking in tongues. While there is a certain historical logic in the various categories, Jacobsen notes that Classical Pentecostals represent the first layer, most notably institutionalisation. He also reminds us that care must be taken to understand the similarity between each category of first, second and third-wave believers.[213] With the risk of oversimplification, McClymond believes that "Classical Pentecostals generally see charismatic renewal as their legacy and evaluate it accordingly."[214] However, differences become more readily apparent if we consider the Pentecostal movement's self-perception and compare it to those of the Charismatic movements.[215] Emic and etic views always create such differences of viewpoint. However, the phenomenon of Pentecostalism is much more complex than any neat categorizing will allow.

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[211] Synan, "Classic Pentecostalism," 553.

[212] Michael McClymond, "Charismatic Renewal and Neo-Pentecostalism: From North American Origins to Global Permutations," in *The Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism*, ed. Cecil M. Robeck Jr. and Amos Yong (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 44–45.

[213] Jacobsen, "Introduction: The History and Significance of Early Pentecostal Theology," 2.

[214] McClymond, "Charismatic Renewal and Neo-Pentecostalism: From North American Origins to Global Permutations," 44.

[215] The insider (emic) perspective is rather different to the outsider (etic). Anderson notes that, "[The outsider] might not admit to the influence of divine agency (such as a theological analysis might do). This means that emic observers sometimes refer to testimonies and accounts of healing and miracles at face value, as they were narrated, and sometimes the boundaries between truth, confession, and science are blurred." Anderson, "Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions," 14–15.

Within the mainline historic Christian Church, Charismatics do not necessarily see the Spirit's outpouring as a divine restoration. Classical Pentecostals have generally understood the outpouring in terms of a church revival. Charismatics view it instead as a "renewal" of elements of spirituality over time in the church throughout its overarching history.[216] Albrecht and Howard remark, "[O]ne term frequently used to refer to the charismatic movement is "the renewal." Where restorationist Pentecostals emphasized discontinuity with the church, Charismatics highlighted the continuity."[217]

While the above touches on some differences, it is no easy task to explicitly respond to any question on what constitutes a *unique* or distinct Pentecostal faith, practice, and experience. According to Jacobsen, many Charismatics "self-consciously adopted a different style of faith than classical pentecostalism."[218] Russell Spittler describes classical Pentecostal churches and the charismatic movement as "two different forces."[219] Differences between many of these groups are primarily associated with institutional affiliation and differing denominational theologies. Typically, while mainline Charismatics drew from traditional Pentecostal faith, practice, and experience, they did not leave their churches and create schisms; instead, they remained and practised within their denomination and resisted membership in any Classical Pentecostal church.[220] While numerous Charismatics do not adhere to or adopt the rules

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[216] Albrecht and Howard, "Pentecostal Spirituality," 247.

[217] Ibid.

[218] Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit*, 287.

[219] Russell P. Spittler, "Preface," in *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism*, ed. Russell P. Spittler (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1976).

[220] Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit*, 287.

and behaviours expected within Pentecostalism,[221] more troubling for Pentecostals is that "some charismatic Christians…deemphasize the centrality and/or the necessity of speaking in tongues."[222] Richard Quebedeaux describes the Pentecostal experience as generally being subdued by the Charismatic Renewal.[223] He notes, "Classical Pentecostal practices such as fasting and exorcism, though not discarded in Charismatic Renewal, have been modified or put under restraint."[224]

On the whole, for Classical Pentecostals, the Charismatic movement is viewed as somewhat disconcerting because it blurs the boundaries of Pentecostalism by adopting some; however, not all of the elements that Pentecostals have come to assume were essential to their faith and practice.[225] While there are differences, finding a unique characteristic that can universally apply to Charismatics and which functions to distinguish them from Classical Pentecostals is not easy.[226] Perhaps as Friesen remarks, "Often the difference between the two is a matter of degrees rather than absolutes."[227]

As noted earlier, there is a diversity of forms and expressions within the global pentecostal movement. According to Michael Wilkinson, whether we consider Pentecostals, Charismatics, or Neo-Pentecostals, "A global perspective does not suggest

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[221] Ibid.

[222] Ibid.

[223] Quebedeaux, *The New Charismatics: The Origins, Development, and Significance of Neo-Pentecostals*, 19–20.

[224] Ibid., 20.

[225] Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit*, 287.

[226] Friesen, *Norming the Abnormal: The Development and Function of the Doctrine of Initial Evidence in Classical Pentecostalism*, 129.

[227] Ibid.

homogeneity."[228] Although one must acknowledge similarities and intersections within the various expressions, this thesis focuses on the Australian context. Therefore, it must be noted that both its expression and history are different from their North American and European counterparts.

4.3 Australian Pentecostalism

Over the last three decades, Pentecostalism in Australia has transitioned from what Andrew Singleton describes as "a fringe religious curiosity to a major religious movement."[229] Today, Pentecostalism has many of the largest congregations in Australia, and within Christianity, it is the most popular choice for young adults.[230] This partly explains why Pentecostalism has become more familiar within the broader Australian context over recent years. Another reason for its familiarity is that it boasts the former Australian Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, among its ranks. When assuming office in 2018, Morrison had been a member of an ACC Church in Sydney for over a decade.[231] In 2021, he spoke at the opening night of the 3-day ACC national conference attended by over 1800 delegates, comprised of church leaders, chaplains, community workers and counsellors from across Australia.[232] The Guardian Newspaper's chief

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[228] Michael Wilkinson, "When Is a Pentecostal a Pentecostal? The Global Perspective of Allan Anderson," *Pneuma* 28, no. 2 (Fall 2006): 280.

[229] Andrew Singleton, "Strong Church or Niche Market? The Demography of the Pentecostal Church in Australia.," in *Australian Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements: Arguments from the Margins*, ed. Cristina Rocha, Mark P. Hutchinson, and Kathleen Openshaw (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2020), 89.

[230] Ibid. See *Figure 18*. on page 189.

[231] Anthony Colangelo, "The Pentecostal Prime Minister: Inside Scott Morrison's Church," *Sydney Morning Herald*, August 25, 2018, accessed June 12, 2020, https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/the-pentecostal-prime-minister-inside-scott-morrison-s-religion-20180825-p4zzos.html.

[232] Australian Christian Churches, "ACC NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2021," *PRIME MINISTER ADDRESSES DELEGATES*, April 2021, accessed September 28, 2021, https://www.acc.org.au/news-media/acc-national-conference-2021/.

political correspondent, Sarah Martin, reported that during the conference, Morrison asked that the Christian Churches help him to help Australia[233] "while revealing his belief that he and his wife, Jenny, have been called upon to do God's work."[234] Morrison's rise to what is colloquially referenced as Australia's "Top Job" has caused the media spotlight to fall on contemporary and historical expressions of Australian Pentecostalism.[235] In an ABC news article, *Scott Morrison: what is Pentecostalism and how might it influence our PM?*[236] Mark Jennings states, "much has been made about his [Morrison's] religious beliefs and the impact they are likely to have on his leadership. Understanding Morrison's faith and how it influences his worldview requires some basic knowledge about Pentecostalism and how it differs from other forms of Christianity."[237]

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[233] Sarah Martin, "Scott Morrison Tells Christian Conference He Was Called to Do God's Work as Prime Minister," *The Guardian*, April 26, 2021, accessed September 28, 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/apr/26/scott-morrison-tells-christian-conference-he-was-called-to-do-gods-work-as-prime-minister.

[234] Ibid.

[235] Johnson and Grim note another example of the connection between Pentecostalism and the political world in Latin America where since the 1980s the rapidly growing Pentecostal community is influencing politics. Guatemala has inaugurated two Pentecostal presidents. Brazil's Evangelical congressional caucus is predominately Pentecostal and includes approximately 10% of Brazil's parliamentarians. Nicaragua's Pentecostals have had two presidential candidates. As the Pentecostal constituent in some Latin American countries represents as much as one third of the population the public and political influence is increasing. Todd M. Johnson and Brian J. Grim, *The World's Religions in Figures: An Introduction to International Religious Demography* (Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 152–153.

[236] Mark Jennings, "Scott Morrison: What Is Pentecostalism and How Might It Influence Our PM?," *ABC News*, October 1, 2018, accessed June 12, 2020, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-10-01/scott-morrison-and-pentecostalism/10325126.

[237] Ibid. Although some may question Morrison's recent decisions around Higher Education and what they suggest about the degree to which his convictions inform his policy. This is based on the overhaul of university fee system and government contributions for student course fees. The proposal will mean the course costs for students studying humanities and society and culture will more than double. While in other fields such as mathematics, education, and agriculture fees will be significantly reduced. Conor Duffy, "University Fees to Be Overhauled, Some Course Costs to Double as Domestic Student Places Boosted," *ABC News*, June 19, 2020, accessed June 29, 2020, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-06-19/university-fees-tertiary-education-overhaul-course-costs/12367742. According to Peter FitzSimons, "The federal government's announcement that it will be no less than doubling the uni fees for some arts students can only be regarded as a discouragement to pursue such…nonsense as philosophy, language, history and feminism". Peter FitzSimons, "I Am Eternally Grateful for My Humble Arts Degree," *Sydney Morning Herald*, June 23, 2020, accessed June 29, 2020, https://www.smh.com.au/national/i-am-eternally-grateful-for-my-humble-arts-degree-20200622-p554zq.html.

Accordingly, in Australia, Pentecostalism is now more than ever a talking point, even amongst the completely unversed general public. For example, articles in mainstream news have appeared with titles such as "Inside our Pentecostal PM's church." In this piece, the modern face of Australian Pentecostalism is described as "young, hip, middle-class, affluent, and well-educated, so much so that it has been dubbed "cool Christianity".[238]

4.3.1 Reaching into the Past

To better understand the contemporary expression of Australian Pentecostalism, there is considerable value in reflecting on the movement's early development. Much of this is traced in Chant's *The Origins and Development of the Pentecostal Movement in Australia 1870-1939* and Clifton's *Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analysing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia.*[239] It is unnecessary to repeat Clifton's or Chant's work in their entirety here, although significant points of interest that have a bearing on this thesis will be highlighted.

It seems there is a need or desire for Australian Pentecostalism to present itself and be understood differently. This is perhaps best evidenced by undertones in the work of Australian scholars who write from the Pentecostal community (or are sympathetic to

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[238] Jacqueline Maley, "Inside Our Pentecostal PM's Church," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, April 20, 2019, accessed November 22, 2020, https://www.smh.com.au/national/inside-our-pentecostal-pm-s-church-20190416-p51ekx.html.

[239] See chapter two of Clifton's work, *From Faith Missions to Churches 1800s to 1930s*.

it). Hutchinson and others note that Australian Pentecostalism is not an American import[240] as assumed by several academic histories written 'outside'[241] of the Pentecostal movement and several authored from within.[242] According to Allan Anderson, these accounts "have often reflected a bias interpreting history from a predominantly white American perspective, neglecting...significant work of Asian, African, African-American and Latino/a Pentecostal pioneers."[243] Writing from the Australian perspective, Grey similarly notes that the histories of North American scholars typically assume that the roots of contemporary global Pentecostalism are found in the 1906 Azusa Street revival[244]. A supposition, she remarks, is "not necessarily supported by international research, particularly within the Australian context."[245]

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[240] Mark Hutchinson, "Australia," ed. Stanley M. Burgess, *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), 26. Mark Hutchinson, Cristina Rocha, and Kathleen Openshaw, "Introduction: Australian Charismatic Movement as a Space of Flows," in *Australian Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements: Arguments from the Margins*, ed. Cristina Rocha, Mark P. Hutchinson, and Kathleen Openshaw (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2020), 15.

[241] See Nils Bloch-Hoell, *The Pentecostal Movement: Its Origin, Development, and Distinctive Character* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1965).

[242] Early examples are penned by Frank Bartleman and Stanley H. Frodsham. Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street* (Los Angeles, California: F. Bartleman, 1925). Bartleman was an evangelist and significant figure in the Azusa Street revival and the early years of the Pentecostal movement. Frodsham, a writer and editor, wrote 15 books, including an early history, first published in 1926,

With Signs Following: The Story of the Pentecostal Revival in the Twentieth Century. There are more recent works by Edith Blumhofer, Charles Conn and Vinson Synan, among many others. Frank Bartleman writes, "Los Angeles seems to be the place and this the time, in the mind of God, for the restoration of the church to her former place. Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1982), 96. However, Bartleman acknowledged the influence of international revivals to the North American context when he wrote, "[t]he present world-wide revival was rocked in the cradle of little Wales... [and it] was 'brought up in India." Ibid., 19.

[243] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 166. Also, See section 4.2.3. of this thesis (The Azusa Street tradition)

[244] Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 24.

[245] Ibid. Hutchinson, "From Corner Shop to Boutique Franchise: The Dilemmas of Australian Pentecostalism," 318. Hutchinson suggests this is the result of poorly developed historiography of Pentecostalism outside of America. Ibid.

According to Hutchinson, "Classical Pentecostalism in Australia emerged largely from socially activist Methodists and Salvation Army people, who were disappointed with liberalization and the declining experientialism in their traditions."[246] The first 160 years of Australian religious and cultural tradition following British imperial colonisation from 1788 were dominated by Anglicanism, Catholicism, Methodism and Presbyterianism, or what Hutchinson terms 'the Big Four'.[247] He states, "Australia was an early recipient of the charismatic potentials within splinter groups from these traditions."[248] Some commence the story in the 1920s, which instantly places the Australian *version* as a post-Azusa Street development and an American import.[249] If we took an earlier starting point, for example, 1909, "it becomes a story about imperial Methodist and Anglican links, connected in particular through Keswick and Alexander Boddy's *Confidence* magazine."[250]

Hutchinson, Elliot, Chant, and Piggin echo Grey's point that Australian Pentecostalism does *not* have its origins in North America as often believed. While it is challenging to locate the genesis of Australian Pentecostalism, it is broadly understood to be indigenous in nature.[251] This implies a certain uniqueness to Australian Pentecostalism that

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[246] Mark Hutchinson, "Australia," ed. Michael Wilkinson et al., *Brill's Encyclopaedia of Global Pentecostalism Online*, 2019, accessed September 17, 2021, http://dx.doi.org.alphacrucis.idm.oclc.org/10.1163/2589-3807_EGPO_COM_033728.

[247] Ibid.

[248] Ibid.

[249] Hutchinson, Rocha, and Openshaw, "Introduction: Australian Charismatic Movement as a Space of Flows," 4.

[250] Ibid.

[251] Hutchinson, "Australia," 26. Stuart Piggin, *Spirit of a Nation: The Story of Australia's Christian Heritage.* (Sydney: Strand, 2004), 64. Chant, *The Spirit of Pentecost: The Origins and Development of the Pentecostal Movement in Australia 1870-1939*, 3–4. Mark Hutchinson, "Australia," ed. Michael Wilkinson et al., *Brill's Encyclopaedia of Global Pentecostalism Online*, 2019, accessed September 17, 2021, http://dx.doi.org.alphacrucis.idm.oclc.org/10.1163/2589-3807_EGPO_COM_033728. Mark

distances it from the widely understood datum point for the movement. However, Clifton warns against overstating this point. He believes doing this would "misunderstand the complex nature of the flow of global ideas."[252] Citing David Martin, Clifton emphasises the "mobilizations of *laissez-faire* lay religion…"[253] between Britain, North America, and Australia. John Alexander Dowie is an example of such mobilisation, demonstrating that Australia was not merely a recipient of such influence but also influenced developments in North America.[254] Following the early development of Australian Pentecostalism, many agree that it was mutually influenced by British and American literature, followed by itinerant evangelism. [255] To further understand the diversity of forms of each group, one must consider the origins of each, the developing history, the theology, and the social elements that give each expression. So, where did Australian Pentecostalism begin, and how did it develop?

Hutchinson, "Framing Australasia's Charismatic Past: Australian Charismatic Movements as a Space of Flows," in *The Religion and Society Research Cluster* (Presented at the Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianities in Australia, University of Western Sydney, 2017). Peter Elliott, "Four Decades of 'Discreet' Charismata: The Catholic Apostolic Church in Australia 1863-1900: Four Decades of 'Discreet' Charismata," *Journal of Religious History* 42, no. 1 (March 2018): 72–83.

[252] Clifton, *Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analysing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia*, 27..

[253] Ibid. David Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish*, Religion and modernity (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 5.

[254] Clifton, *Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analysing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia*, 27. Dowie was born in Scotland and spent 16 years of his ministry in Australia before migrating to the USA. Chant notes that the Dowie Movement or Dowieites were amongst the finest Pentecostal pioneers. Chant, *The Spirit of Pentecost: The Origins and Development of the Pentecostal Movement in Australia 1870-1939*, 3.

[255] Hutchinson, "Australia," 26; Piggin, *Spirit of a Nation*, 64; Chant, *The Spirit of Pentecost: The Origins and Development of the Pentecostal Movement in Australia 1870-1939*, 3. Chant concurs with Piggin and notes that Australian Pentecostalism's roots are primarily European. Piggin, *Spirit of a Nation*, 64; Chant, *The Spirit of Pentecost: The Origins and Development of the Pentecostal Movement in Australia 1870-1939*, 3.

The work of Australian historians such as Chant[256], Hutchinson[257], Elliot[258], Damon Adams[259] and others have progressively traced potential origins for Australian Pentecostal from 1926 to possibly as far back as 1853[260], when "The first *organized* charismatic tradition in the country was the Catholic Apostolic Church."[261] Pre-Azusa Street, Australian Pentecostalism is present in the 1870s and 1880s within the practice and theology of Methodists and its derivative, the Salvation Army. According to Hutchinson, "Most of the first generation of Australian Pentecostals came from this tradition."[262] What had been experienced by Methodists and The Salvation Army revivalists was consistent with the behaviours and experiences of the Good News Hall in Melbourne in 1909. This is very different from Dayton's argument, which contends the preceding movements form a "pre-Pentecostal tinderbox"[263], leading to the

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[256] Chant, *The Spirit of Pentecost: The Origins and Development of the Pentecostal Movement in Australia 1870-1939*, 25–58; Barry Chant, *Heart of Fire: The Story of Australian Pentecostalism* (Unley, South Australia: Luke Publications, 1975).

[257] Hutchinson, "The Problem with 'Waves': Mapping Charismatic Potential in Italian Protestantism 1890–1929," 34–54.

[258] Elliott, "Four Decades of 'Discreet' Charismata," 72–83; Peter Elliott, "Australian Proto-Pentecostals: The Contribution of the Catholic Apostolic Church," in *Australian Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements: Arguments from the Margins*, ed. Cristina Rocha, Mark P. Hutchinson, and Kathleen Openshaw (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2020), 53–68.

[259] Damon S. Adams, "Divine Healing in Australian Protestantism, 1870-1940: Divine Healing in Australian Protestantism," *Journal of Religious History* 41, no. 3 (2017): 346–363.

[260] Mark Hutchinson, "Australia." Edited by Michael Wilkinson, Connie Au, Jörg Haustein, and Todd M. Johnson. *Brill's Encyclopaedia of Global Pentecostalism Online*, 2019. Accessed September 17, 2021. Elliott, "Four Decades of 'Discreet' Charismata," 72–83. According to Elliot, "The first official CAC representative to arrive in Australia was evangelist Alfred Wilkinson, who arrived on February 14,1853 and began services in a tent Melbourne." Peter Elliott, "Nineteenth-Century Australian Charismata: Edward Irving's Legacy*," *Pneuma* 34, no. 1 (2012): 29. Although direct evidence of the practice of charismata is not currently available, Elliot suggests as "the CAC leadership that arrived in Australia in 1853 came from a context where charismata such as prophecy and glossolalia were employed in prayer meeting and public worship, therefore, it is highly likely that CAC leaders arriving in Australia continued this practice. Ibid.

[261] Mark Hutchinson, "Australia." Edited by Michael Wilkinson, Connie Au, Jörg Haustein, and Todd M. Johnson. Also See Elliott, "Four Decades of 'Discreet' Charismata," 72–83.

[262] Hutchinson, "Framing Australasia's Charismatic Past: Australian Charismatic Movements as a Space of Flows," 9.

[263] Mark Hutchinson, "From Corner Shop to Boutique Franchise: The Dilemmas of Australian Pentecostalism," in *Global Renewal Christianity: Spirit-Empowered Movements Past, Present, and*

impression that Pentecostalism "started" after these movements in 1906, something which the evidence does not directly support.

Within Australian Pentecostalism, the first Pentecostal local church, the Good News Hall in Richmond, Melbourne, was founded and led by Sarah Jane (Jeannie) Lancaster in 1908[264]. At that time, the Pentecostal movement formed a handful of prominent denominations.[265] Clifton describes the early Pentecostal revival in Australia as "non-self-identifying".[266] Those involved were generally understood (and understood themselves) as a *renewal* of the wider church and therefore did not have an individual ecclesiology and theology.[267] Clifton notes,

> What is not present in the first fifteen years or so of the movement's history is the formal institutional structures and authorities that are generally associated with church organisation, and that are usually seen as necessary for the long-term survival of the community. Pentecostals, with their belief in the imminent return of Christ, were not interested in long-term institutional survival. Instead, early Pentecostalism in Australia can be best understood as a Faith Missions movement, although one that was indigenous rather than driven by foreign interests.[268]

Future, ed. Vinson Synan and Amos Yong, vol. 1: Asia and Oceania (Florida: Charisma House Books, 2016), 318.

[264]   Chant, *The Spirit of Pentecost: The Origins and Development of the Pentecostal Movement in Australia 1870-1939*, 44.

[265] According to Margaret Poloma these denominations "were born out of or changed by the Azusa Street Revival". Margaret M. Poloma, *Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2003), 20. For further detail see Chant's *The Origins and Development of the Pentecostal Movement in Australia 1870-1939* and Clifton's *Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analysing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia,* chapter two.

[266] Shane Clifton, "Identity and the Shape of Pentecostal Theology," *Australian Pentecostal Studies* 19 (2017): 5.

[267] Ibid., 4.

[268] Ibid., 58. "THE APOSTOLIC FAITH MISSION is NOT another CHURCH (sic). It is the Assembly of those who, throughout Australasia, are seeking to prove that our Blessed Lord is just the same as He was when He commissioned the disciples to "go into all the world". Sarah Jane Lancaster, "Good News Hall," *Good News* 17, no. 10 (October 1926): 10.

While Australian Pentecostalism has inherited much from the Northern hemisphere, particularly during its humble beginnings[269], it would be fair to speak of it as a unique expression as it retains a distinctive character compared to its western counterparts.[270] Many would agree that its roots were primarily European and that similarities can be noted[271]. While sameness is recognised, Chant highlights several of the differences.

First, Chant notes that from its early beginnings, Australian Pentecostalism was, in essence, a middle-class movement rather than a movement of the marginalised and disenfranchised, as is commonly found elsewhere. Hence, the socio-economic reasons for the eschatological urgency in Australia were less evident. The typical adherents were from the secure end of the socio-economic stratum, unlike North America and Great Britain, where it was generally understood that Pentecostals were drawn from the lower end of this stratum.[272] Stephen Hunt supports Chant's assessment of the North American context.[273] Kay notes the situation in Pentecostal Churches in Great Britain during the

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[269] Michael Di Giacomo, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Canada: Its Origins, Development, and Distinct Culture," in *Canadian Pentecostalism: Transition and Transformation*, ed. Michael Wilkinson (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), 31.

[270] Piggin, *Spirit of a Nation*, 64; Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 142–143.

[271] Chant, *The Spirit of Pentecost: The Origins and Development of the Pentecostal Movement in Australia 1870-1939*, 3.

[272] Ibid.

William K. Kay notes, "In most of the UK the Pentecostal churches in the 1960s were themselves stuck in an earlier era. The pastors were poorly educated…[and] many of the classical Pentecostal churches had a working-class ethos which was unattractive to the middle class." William K. Kay, "Radical Networks in the UK and Ecumenism," in *Ecumenical Studies* (Presented at the The 43rd annual meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Chester University (UK), 2014), 4. According to McDonnell, "It was during the Second World War that classical Pentecostalism in the United States moved up from the lower socio-economic groups into middle-class America." Kilian McDonnell, "Classical Pentecostal/Roman Catholic Dialogue: Hopes and Future Possibilities," in *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism*, ed. Russell P. Spittler (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1976), 259.

[273] Stephen Hunt, *A History of the Charismatic Movement in Britain and the United States of America: The Pentecostal Transformation of Christianity* (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2009), 54.

1960s, stating that "The pastors were poorly educated… [And] many of the classical Pentecostal churches had a working-class ethos which was unattractive to the middle class."[274] So while elsewhere, there existed something of a stereotypical view of Pentecostals as comprising those from the lower socio-economic milieu attracted to the eschatological promise of faith, in Australia, things were different. Not only were Australian Pentecostals not disenfranchised, but according to Singleton, "They were pursuing higher education and seeking professional employment."[275] By utilising a comparative study of occupations within Australia, Chant "shows that the percentage of Pentecostals involved in professional occupations in the 1930s was roughly double that of the wider community while the percentage of labourers was approximately half."[276] Interestingly, if the early Australian Pentecostals were mostly, or at least often, educated, it could be speculated that they were not anti-intellectual. This is not to say they did not approach the biblical text in an anti-intellectual way, but it does raise the question of why they preferred an anti-intellectual approach.

Second, the early Pentecostal communities within the United States and Great Britain usually developed in cities, whereas in Australia, they typically developed in rural areas and farming communities. Nearly three-quarters of the first 34 congregations in

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Although Hunt notes that, "It soon became clear that the early charismatics [Neo-Pentecostals] were different from the classical Pentecostals. Unlike the older Pentecostals, the Charismatic movement … [had] economic mobility and found its home among the middle-classes." Ibid. Quebedeaux also notes that, "Charismatic Renewal is characterized by a very large representation of individuals from the middle and upper-middle socio-economic levels of society." Richard Quebedeaux, *The New Charismatics: The Origins, Development, and Significance of Neo-Pentecostals* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1976), 10.

[274] Kay, "Radical Networks in the UK and Ecumenism," 4.

[275] Singleton, "Strong Church or Niche Market? The Demography of the Pentecostal Church in Australia.," 89..

[276] Chant, *The Spirit of Pentecost: The Origins and Development of the Pentecostal Movement in Australia 1870-1939*, 3.

Australia were found within such communities.[277] However, this is not the case today, as ACC churches are spread over various localities across Australia. Based on NCLS research published in December 2020, 65% of ACC churches are found in urban areas and large regional centres. The remaining 35% are found in rural areas with less than 200 people and larger rural centres with up to 20,000 people.[278]

A third distinctive feature of Australian Pentecostalism is that "over half the Pentecostal congregations functioning by 1930 were established and led by women". [279] These roles were not passive ones, such as the *pastor's wife*. Instead, these women were preachers who, according to Chant, "were involved in decision-making, teaching, administering the sacraments, and general leadership."[280] In the newly established fellowship of the Australian Assemblies of God (AOG) of 1937, women's eligibility for leadership was recognised within its constitution.[281] However, while women pioneered the early fellowships, Grey notes, "they found it difficult to establish themselves as ministers over the long-term. The broader cultural pattern of male leadership that emerged in subsequent years has dominated the fellowship, producing an ongoing tension between

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[277] Ibid.

[278] Ruth Powell et al., *2019 ACC Church Census*, Headline Report, NCLS Commissioned Report (Sydney: NCLS Research, December 14, 2020).

[279] Chant, *The Spirit of Pentecost: The Origins and Development of the Pentecostal Movement in Australia 1870-1939*, 3.. Chant notes, "Of the eighteen Pentecostal churches founded in this country [Australia] up to and including 1925, eleven were planted by women. Of the 37 churches established by 1930, over half (20) were started by women." Ibid., 268.

[280] Chant, *The Spirit of Pentecost: The Origins and Development of the Pentecostal Movement in Australia 1870-1939*, 268.

[281] From the first conference of the AOG in Australia , an article from its constitution reads, "Believing that in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in this dispensation of grace the Lord has made no distinction in pouring out His Spirit both upon His handmaidens as well as His brethren, we recognize the right and privilege of those so called and gifted to minister, whether they be brethren or sisters in the Lord." David Cartledge, *The Apostolic Revolution: The Restoration of Apostles and Prophets in the Assemblies of God in Australia.* (Sydney, Australia: Paraclete Institute, 2000), 294.

ideology and practice."[282] The shift is evident when we compare the leadership in early Australian Pentecostalism to the current leadership within the ACC National Executive, consisting of eight males and one female. Anderson remarks that a characteristic of Pentecostal churches is that the leadership is usually male.[283]

4.3.2 Australian Christian Churches

As already noted, there are numerous varieties of Pentecostalism within Australia. This study focuses on the Australian Christian Churches[284] (ACC), the most significant Pentecostal movement across the country. It was formed in 1937 and was formerly called the Assemblies of God (AOG) in Australia. The ACC incorporates approximately 75% of all Pentecostal churches in Australia. It comprises over 1,000 individual self-governing churches.[285] Although there are differences within what is described as a

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[282] Jacqueline Grey, "Torn Stockings and Enculturation: Women Pastors in the Australian Assemblies of God" Australasian Pentecostal Studies, no. 5/6 (2001), accessed August 31, 2019, http://aps.webjournals.org/articles/4/1/2002/2969.

[283] Allan Anderson et al., "Introduction," in Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods, ed. Allan Anderson et al. (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2010), 3.

[284] The movement was renamed in 2007. Although as Clifton notes, "The ACC was launched in 2000…with the vision to become: The Public Face of a Growing Church: Australian Christian Churches is an alliance of contemporary churches committed to communicating Christianity within Australian society through vibrant church services, relevant preaching, and practical community care." Australian Christian Churches 2004 website cited by Clifton, Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analysing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia, 168. According to Clifton, "[T]he ACC never really accomplished its goals. While originally bringing together the AGA, Apostolic Churches Australia, Bethesda Ministries International, and other smaller fellowships and independent churches, some of the more prominent Pentecostal and Charismatic movements chose not to participate. These included Christian Outreach Centre Australia, Christian City Churches, the Christian Revival Crusade movement, and the Foursquare Church, who all had concerns about issues of independence and autonomy, church government, and doctrinal identity. The impetus of the ACC was also hampered by the moral fall of its second president, Pat Mesiti. Ultimately, the ACC was abandoned as an ecumenical body, and in 2007, Brian Houston announced that the AGA had taken on the designation ACC as its trading name. While churches are still formally able to retain the Assemblies of God nomenclature, the movement itself is to trade under the Australian Christian Churches label." Ibid., 168–169.

[285] Australian Christian Churches, "Who We Are." Clifton, Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analysing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia, 2. In November 2019, the

"movement of Churches"[286], there are also similarities. The various churches of the ACC share common beliefs[287] and "a common identity based on the experience and doctrine of the baptism in the Holy Spirit."[288] With approximately 375,000 – 385,000 constituents,[289] the growth of the ACC in many ways mirrors the global context; see *Figure 16.*[290] and *Figure 17.*[291] below:

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total number of active churches within the ACC was 1039. Data from Powell et al., *2019 ACC Church Census*.

[286] Clifton, *Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analysing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia*, 3.

[287] See ACC website for a list of beliefs, https://www.acc.org.au/about-us/.

[288] Clifton, *Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analysing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia*, 3. Clifton highlights the move away from a link between Baptism in the Holy Spirit and glossolalia in Australian Pentecostalism, a move which was informal in nature and occurred without "debate or discussion". Ibid., 265.

[289] The ACC website indicates both figures. 385,000 is stated on the home page of the ACC website, Australian Christian Churches, "Australian Christian Churches," *OVER 1,000 CHURCHES ACROSS AUSTRALIA*, August 2021, accessed September 28, 2021, https://www.acc.org.au/. 375,000 is stated on another page within the website,

Australian Christian Churches, "Who We Are."

It must be noted that in recent surveys up until 2018, the ACC Census measured church size in two different ways, first, by regular attenders ("constituent"), described as "all people to whom you are ministering through your church and who consider this their home church". Second, by weekend church service head counts, this is the national estimated number of people attending ACC church services in a given weekend. A significant change to the wording of the 2019 ACC Church census may indicate figures that are inconsistent with previous years. The wording of the question for head counts changed from only considering services from Friday-Sunday in 2018, to counting services from all 7 days of the week in 2019. For the 2019 ACC Census this figure is estimated at 196,700 people. The wording of the question for regular attenders changed from 'Total constituents' in 2018, to 'Total number of people on your church database' in 2019. There is no indication as to the currency of the various church databases, and therefore accuracy of the 2019 total figure.

For figures see Powell et al., *2019 ACC Church Census*; Ruth Powell et al., *2018 ACC Church Census*, Headline Report, NCLS Commissioned Report (Sydney: NCLS Research, August 18, 2019).

[290] *Figure 16.* has been compiled from numerous sources. Powell et al., *2019 ACC Church Census*; Powell et al., *2018 ACC Church Census*; Ruth Powell et al., *2018 ACC Census Technical Report*, NCLS Commissioned Report. (Sydney: NCLS Research, 2019); Ruth Powell et al., *2017 ACC Church Census*, Headline Report, NCLS Commissioned Report (Sydney: NCLS Research, July 6, 2018); Ruth Powell et al., *2017 ACC Census Technical Report*, NCLS Commissioned Report. (Sydney: NCLS Research, July 2018); Ruth Powell et al., *2016 ACC Church Census*, Headline Report, NCLS Commissioned Report (Sydney: NCLS Research, December 18, 2016); Ruth Powell et al., *2015 ACC Church Census*, Headline Report, NCLS Commissioned Report (Sydney: NCLS Research, January 20, 2016); Ruth Powell et al., *2014 ACC Church Census*, Headline Report, NCLS Commissioned Report (Sydney: NCLS Research, March 27, 2015); Ruth Powell et al., *2013 ACC Church Census*, Headline Report, NCLS Commissioned Report (Sydney: NCLS Research, 2014). Clifton, *Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analysing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia*, 3. Where no data was available growth rates have been extrapolated, assuming relatively consistent growth. Clifton shows a relatively consistent growth rate with 1482 constituents in 1937 and 7302 in 1972. Ibid.

[291] Data from Powell et al., *2019 ACC Church Census*.
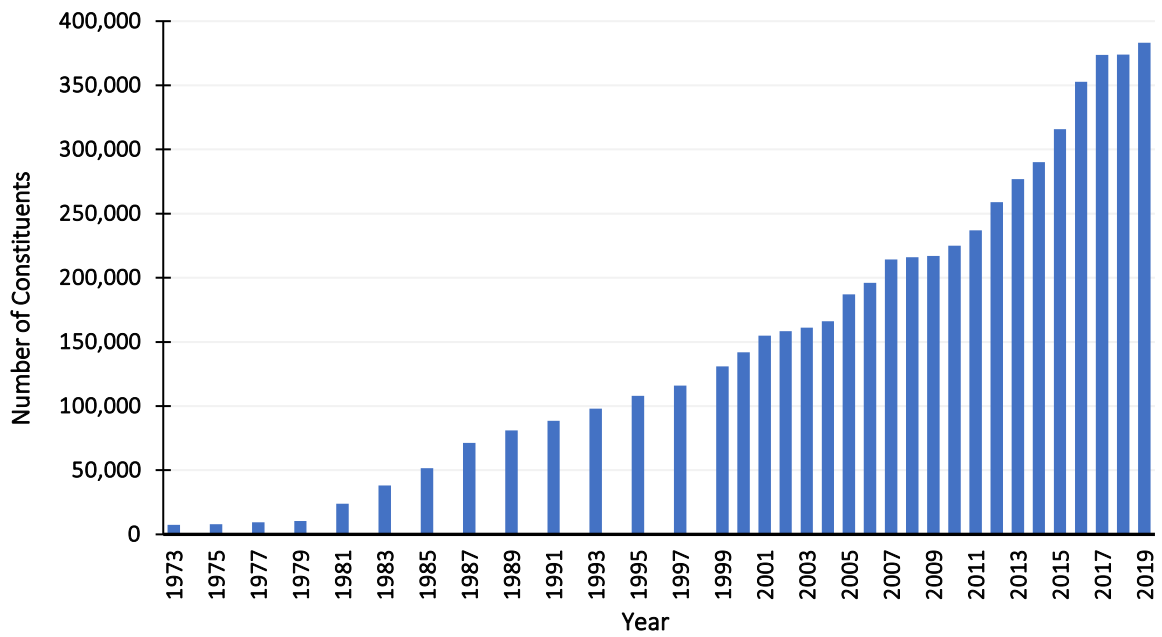
Figure 16. Total ACC Constituents from 1973 to 2019
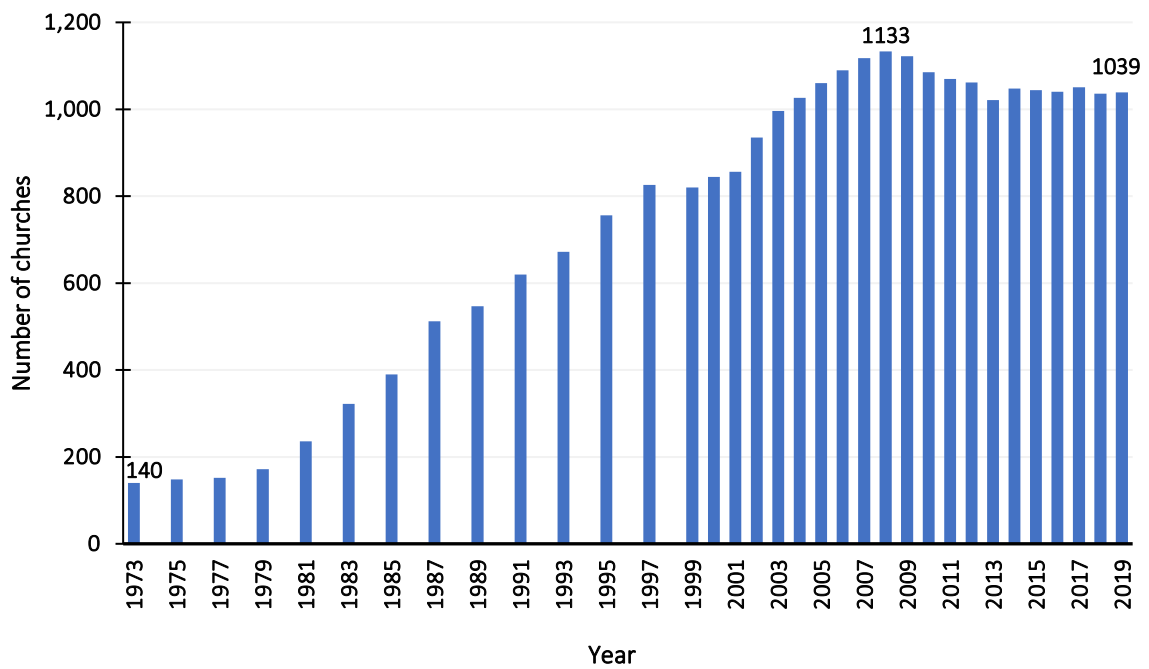
Figure 17. Total Number of ACC Churches between 1973 and 2019

Figure 17. above indicates a steady increase in ACC churches from 140 in 1973 to 1133

churches in 2008. After this period, there were five consecutive years of decline (2009-

2013) despite 90 new churches being planted,[292] which is equally indicative of the relatively high number of church closures. However, during this apparent decline, the total number of constituents (see *Figure 16.*) continued to increase exponentially.[293] This indicates that individual church numbers are generally on the increase.

Many of the local ACC churches are "young", with over half starting during this millennium and almost a quarter starting within the last decade. See *Table 5.*[294]

Year churches were started	% of total churches
After 2013	24
2007-2013	19
2000-2006	12
1990-1999	15
1980-1989	17
1970-1979	5
1960-1969	2
1950-1959	2
1900-1949	3
Before 1900	0

Table 5.: Year churches were started

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[292] Powell et al., *2013 ACC Church Census*.

[293] Clifton argues that the "rejection of dogmatism by the AGA [Assemblies of God in Australia] was one of the reasons for the movement's growth, since many of the Charismatics that joined the AGA came from diverse traditions and theological persuasions." Clifton, *Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analysing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia*, 194.

[294] Data from NCLS Research, Powell et al., *2019 ACC Church Census*. The total % in *Table 5.* equates to 99%, this is explained in the NCLS methodology which states, "All total counts should be treated as estimates". Ruth Powell et al., *2018 ACC Census Technical Report*, NCLS Commissioned Report. (Sydney: NCLS Research, August 2019), 7. It is worth noting from the 2018 report that a number of churches started before 1900. A figure does not appear in the 2019 report as it has been rounded down to zero, however, the figure 0.2% is included in 2018 report, simply to highlight the fact several churches existed prior this date.

Within Australian Christianity, more broadly, the number of "young" churches within the ACC is significant when coupled with the percentage of youth attendees is 23%.[295] Clifton remarks, "In recent decades, at a time when other Australian churches have experienced stagnation or decline, and when the constituency of many denominations is ageing, Australian Pentecostal churches have continued to grow rapidly, particularly among young people."[296] The religious affiliation by age can be seen below in *Figure 18*.[297]
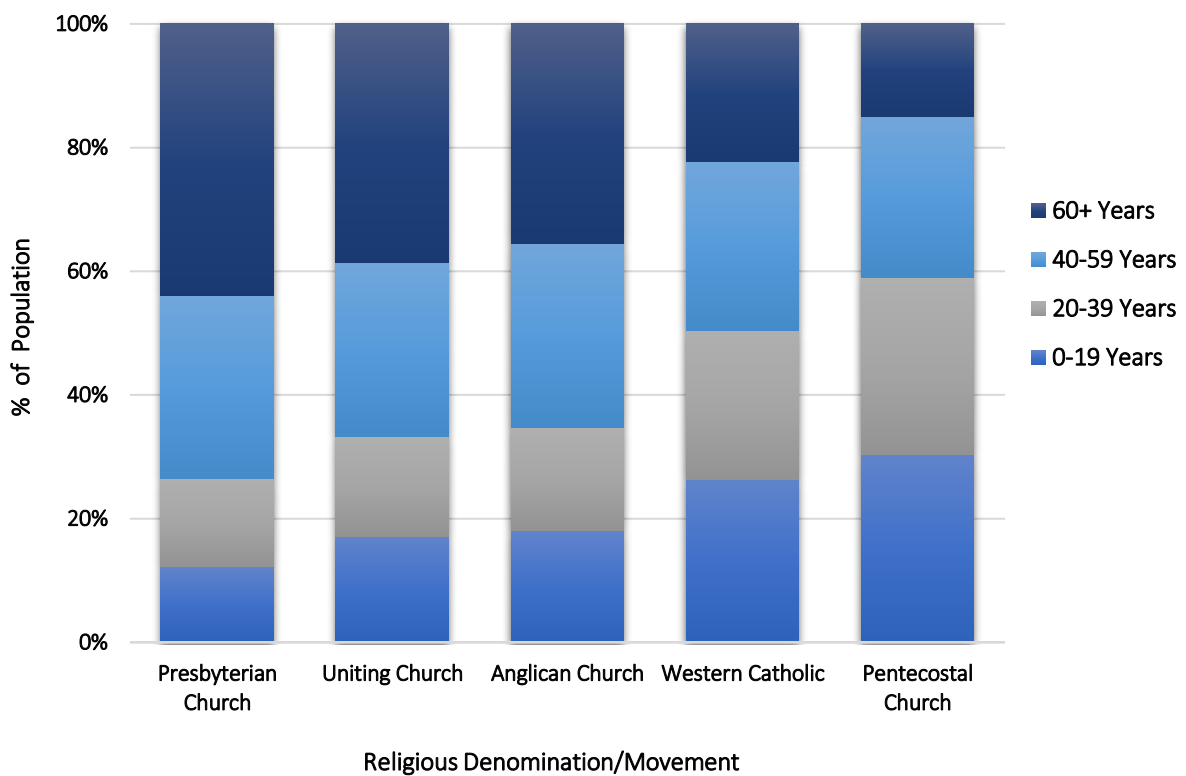
Figure 18. Religious Affiliation by Age in Australia

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[295] The figure is estimated at 89,170 youth and comprises of children between the ages of 0-17 yrs. Of this figure 54930 are aged between 0-12 yrs. Powell et al., *2019 ACC Church Census*.

[296] Clifton, *Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analysing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia*, 2.

[297] *Figure 18*. has been calculated from data collected in the 2016 Australian Census.

According to Singleton, the current younger generation of Pentecostals has simply replaced the previous generation from the 1960s and 1970s.[298] Furthermore, "It is now a religious movement characterised by great cultural diversity, perhaps more than any other Christian denomination or movement in Australia."[299] According to the 2019 ACC census, 45% of ACC local churches have an ethnic group other than Anglo-Celtic as their most common group.[300] In the same survey, over 52% of churches can be identified as "multi-cultural."[301]

While many ACC churches offer formal Christian education, in recent years, the growth in the percentage of churches offering formal Christian education has been minimal, if not stagnant; see *Figure 19.* below.

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[298] Singleton, "Strong Church or Niche Market? The Demography of the Pentecostal Church in Australia.," 89.

[299] Ibid. In interpreting these results it should be acknowledged that they are based on the 897 churches that responded, hence, the results are only indicative. Powell et al., *2019 ACC Church Census*.

[300] Powell et al., *2019 ACC Church Census*. By way of comparison, this figure was 28% in the 2013 ACC Church Census. Powell et al., *2013 ACC Church Census*.

[301] "Multi-cultural" is taken to be where at least 20% of attenders are not from the most common ethnic group. Powell et al., *2019 ACC Church Census*.
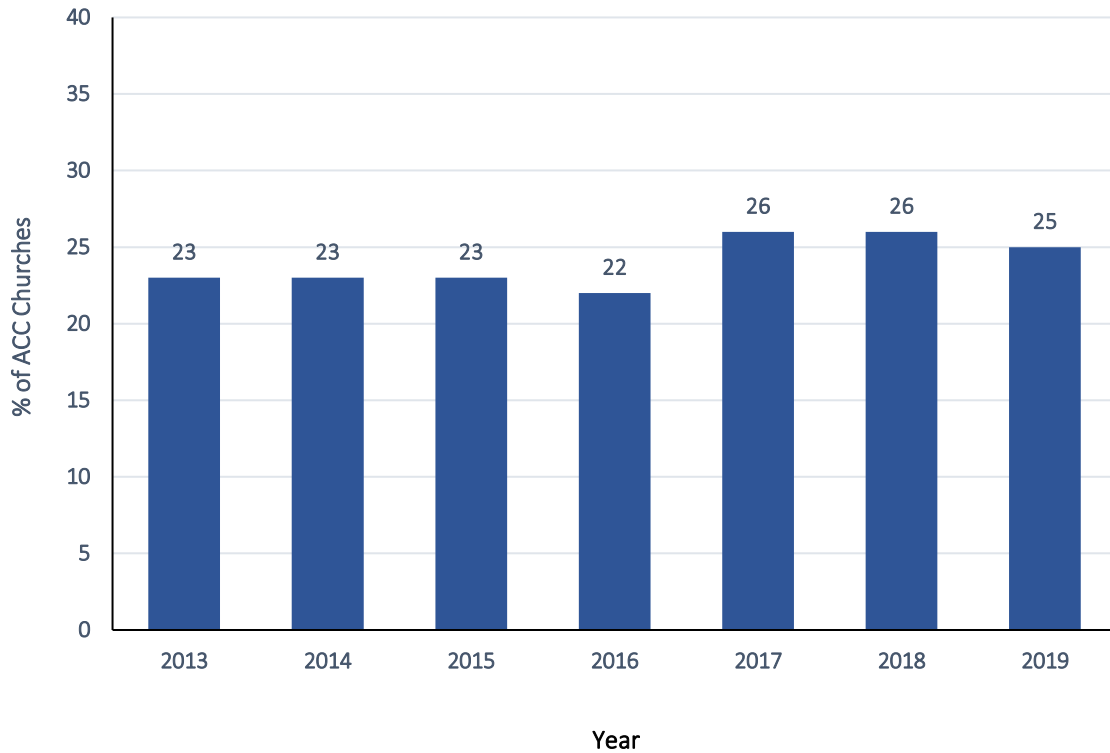
Figure 19. Formal Christian Education Across ACC Churches

As noted in chapter two[302], Lancaster's statement, uttered nearly a century ago, called for theological training to be undertaken within the context of the local church rather than a theological college. While not representative of all those currently undertaking theological training, most of those pursuing formal theological education at the national college of the ACC, AC, believe formal academic study of the Bible should be undertaken in the local church *and* an academic institute.[303] The relatively minor growth in formal Christian education across ACC Churches may indicate a brand of anti-intellectualism, perhaps further supported by the lack of formal educational requirements attached to holding ministerial credentials. Within the ACC, the current

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[302] See page 31.

[303] See the results of survey question 20, on page 30-31.

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theological qualifier for a ministry credential as a pastor is a Certificate IV in vocational education. Spirit-gifting is considered the main factor in equipping for ministry rather than theological qualifications, as "spirit gifting" is functional and makes ministry and churches work.[304]

Interestingly, more students are now engaging in theological study at AC. The question is, why is there an uptake in formal theological training? Is this in contrast to anti-intellectualism, or does it signal something else? What we seem to have, is something in tension (again). This tension is between one, the original prognosis that formal theological training is either not required or, if it is, that it be undertaken within the context of a church, coupled with an elementary level of education set within the ACC in terms of qualifications for formal ministerial roles and two, the increasing number of people pursuing formal theological training at AC. Indeed, Lancaster's views regarding the location of theological training notwithstanding, the formation of Commonwealth Bible College (now AC) by the AOG in Australia (now the ACC) was for the explicit purpose of training men and women for ministry.[305]

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[304] Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 20.

[305] See ACC website, Denise A. Austin, *Our College: A History of the National College of Australian Christian Churches (Assemblies of God in Australia)* (Sydney, Australia: APS, 2013), 31.

4.3.3 Alphacrucis College

The national training college of the Assemblies of God in Australia[306] was established initially in Melbourne in 1948 as Commonwealth Bible College. "It subsequently moved to Brisbane in 1949 and to Katoomba, NSW, in 1974. In 1993 the college's name was changed to Southern Cross College, and in 1996 it relocated to Chester Hill, Sydney."[307]

In 2009 the college changed its name to Alphacrucis College (AC). It now has a campus in every state and territory across Australia, one in Auckland, New Zealand, and has developed a comprehensive online program. AC is a self-accrediting higher education provider and teaches over forty accredited courses through to doctoral degrees in theology and ministry, business, education, and social science.

As noted above, the explicit purpose of the college was to train students for ministry.[308] A prospectus from 1948 states the purpose as " the promotion of a more thorough knowledge of God's word. For those who have been called of God to enter the active ministry, and for others who feel the need of Bible knowledge and instruction."[309]

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[306] A detailed history of Alphacrucis College over its first 66 years is given by Denise Austin in, *Our College: A History of the National College of Australian Christian Churches (Assemblies of God in Australia)*. It traces the various locations, developments, and name changes.

[307] Alphacrucis College, "Alphacrucis College," *AC History*, August 2019, accessed September 29, 2021, https://www.ac.edu.au/about/history/.

[308] The current mission statement reads, "Equipping Christian leaders to change the world".

Alphacrucis College, "Our Vision, Mission and Values," January 2022, accessed January 31,

https://www.ac.edu.au/about/vision-mission-values/

[309] "Assemblies of God in Australia Bible College: Prospectus," 1948.

In the 1960s, Pentecostal institutes in North America were actively beginning to pursue higher education standards and status.[310]During this time, educational advances within Australian Pentecostalism were challenged as a result of what historian Denise Austin describes as the continued "[a]nti-intellectual sentiment…within the ranks."[311] Bryon Klaus and Loren Triplett speak of Pentecostalism's "tenuous relationship with theological training. Formal training spoke of dead intellectualism that was to be avoided at all costs because it stifled the Spirit-filled life."[312] Compared to the North American Pentecostal context of the 1960s, similar advances in higher education within Australia, specifically within the national college of the ACC, did not begin to emerge for a further two to three decades.[313] So, despite the early stages of the movement's development being marked by a lack of critical engagement and reflective interpretation of the Bible,[314] a gradual shift towards the end of the twentieth century is noted in the increased numbers choosing to pursue formal academic study. However, no clear parallel can be made between attending AC and a desire to "critically" engage with the

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[310] Austin, *Our College: A History of the National College of Australian Christian Churches (Assemblies of God in Australia)*, 97.

[311] Ibid. Austin notes this anti-intellectual attitude was also evidenced by the initial lack of Pentecostal representation at Australian and New Zealand Association of Theological Schools (ANZATS), an interdenominational conference which was formed in 1967. Ibid.

[312] Bryon D. Klaus and Loren O. Triplett, "National Leadership in Pentecostal Missions," in *Called and Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective*, ed. Byon D. Klaus Murray A. Dempster, Douglas Peterson (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 226.

[313] In 1991 the first two sessional staff to hold doctorates was employed at the national college, lecturing in church history and pastoral theology. The first courses to be offered in higher education at the institute were the Diploma of Ministry and the Diploma of Missions in 1993. The bachelor's in theology was first offered in 1998.

Austin, *Our College: A History of the National College of Australian Christian Churches (Assemblies of God in Australia)*, 216, 323.

[314] Ma, "Biblical Studies in the Pentecostal Tradition: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," 54.

biblical text, as students may be merely seeking a qualification that bestows some validity upon other roles, such as ministerial.

The increase in engagement is evident when considering the growth in the number of students pursuing undergraduate courses at AC. Theology and ministry courses remain dominant, attracting, on average, far higher enrolments than any other vocational and higher education course. *Figure 20.*[315] illustrates growth in student enrolments, specifically those studying ministry and theology courses at the undergraduate level. [316]
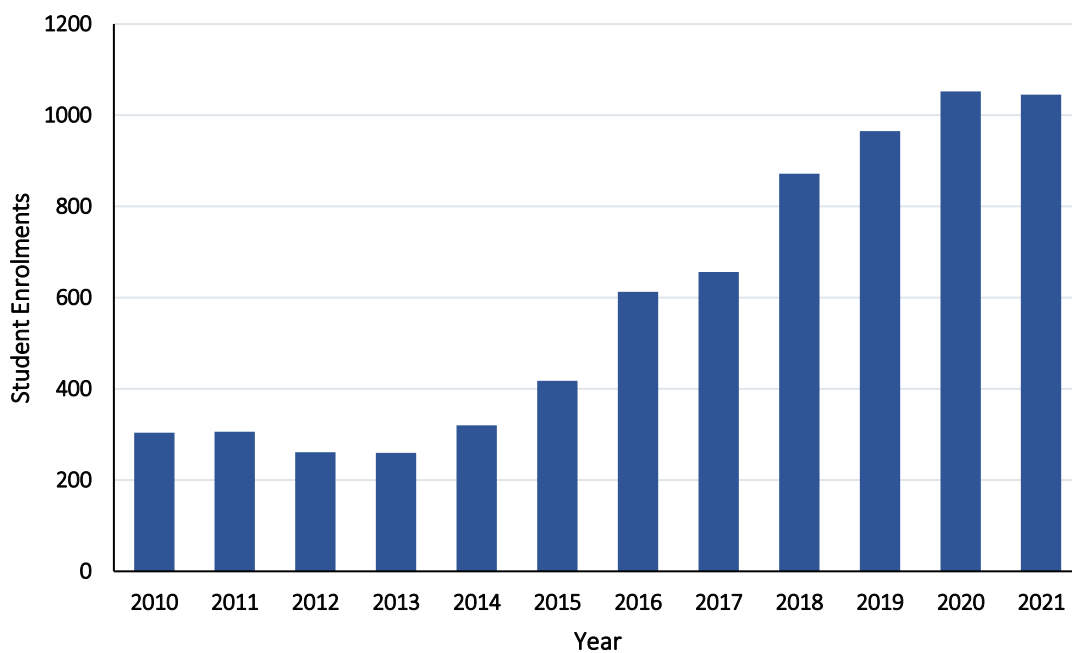
Figure 20. Student Enrolments in Ministry or Theology Undergraduate Awards 2010-2021

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[315] *Figure 21*. Includes the following awards, BTh, BCM, BMin, BBT (Double degree in Business and Theology), BBM (Combined Degree in Business and Ministry), BMB (Double degree in Business and Ministry), and ADM (Associate degree in Ministry). The BMB replaced the BBM in 2020. Data obtained via personal correspondence with AC, Narelle Coetzee, "AC Data," September 29, 2021.

[316] It must be noted the increase in 2018 is partly due to the merger between Alphacrucis College and Harvest Bible College.

More broadly, student enrolments have grown across all higher education courses at AC, as indicated below in *Figure 21*.
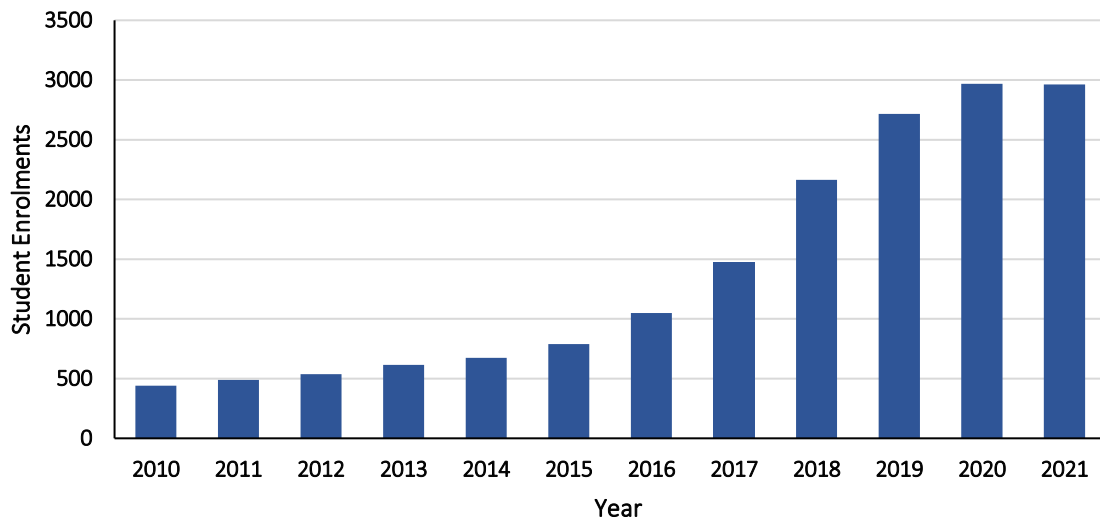
Figure 21. Higher Education Student Enrolments 2010-2021

Though AC's emphasis is on training people for Christian ministry, it also offers education and training to the broader marketplace. As the college continues to grow, its motivation to influence future leaders of Australia has led to AC actively pursuing a vision to see the college transition to a Christan university. A recently developed AC marketing brochure states,

> The vision to transition from college to university is primarily based on the rationale that universities exert a powerful influence on culture and society and that a distinctively Christian university would contribute to the church's mission to influence all spheres of society.[317]

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[317] Alphacrucis College, *WHY?*, Brochure (Sydney, Australia: Alphacrucis College, 2018).

For AC, a Christian University would seek to be firmly rooted in the Christian tradition and incorporate its philosophical and moral assumptions into its curriculum, learning environment, and intentional community design and development.[318] The expectation is that a Christian university will equip students to be leaders in influential sectors of society, reinforce their Christian values[319], and ultimately avoid a disembodied theology. This echoes the words of Kärkkäinen, who remarks, "Theological education that does not lead to the adoption of "practices" and virtues relevant and conducive to Christian life and ministry is simply a failed exercise."[320]

While AC's application to become a University College in early 2021 was initially unsuccessful, the leadership of AC continued to pursue it actively. Following an appeal against TEQSA's decision, University College status was successful in 2022. A significant step in progressing toward achieving full university status. Recalling that AC's rationale for pursuing such a status is the idea that "universities exert a powerful influence on culture and society and that a distinctly Christian university would contribute to the church's mission to influence", it certainly seems a right and proper, and indeed desirable aspiration for an institution proclaiming the centrality of the Christian Gospel. Indeed, the 19th century English theologian and scholar John Henry Newman may be worth quoting here at length:

> The Philosopher, indeed, and the man [sic] of the world differ in their very notion,
> but the methods, by which they are respectively formed, are pretty much the same.
> The Philosopher has the same command of matters of thought, which the true citizen

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[318] "WHY?" (Alphacrucis College, 2018).

[319] Neil Scott, "Alphacrucis 'University' Vision and Plan" (Alphacrucis College, 2018).

[320] Kärkkäinen, "'Epistemology, Ethos, and Environment,'" 254.

and gentleman has of matters of business and conduct. If then a practical end must be assigned to a University course, I say it is that of training good members of society. Its art is the art of social life, and its end is fitness for the world. It neither confines its views to particular professions on the one hand, nor creates heroes or inspires genius on the other. Works indeed of genius fall under no art; heroic minds come under no rule; a University is not a birthplace of poets or of immortal authors, of founders of schools, leaders of colonies, or conquerors of nations. It does not promise a generation of Aristotles or Newtons, of Napoleons or Washingtons, of Raphaels or Shakespeares, though such miracles of nature it has before now contained within its precincts. Nor is it content on the other hand with forming the critic or the experimentalist, the economist or the engineer, though such too it includes within its scope. But a University training is the great ordinary means to a great but ordinary end; it aims at raising the intellectual tone of society, at cultivating the public mind, at purifying the national taste, at supplying true principles to popular enthusiasm and fixed aims to popular aspiration, at giving enlargement and sobriety to the ideas of the age, at facilitating the exercise of political power, and refining the intercourse of private life… It prepares him to fill any post with credit, and to master any subject with facility. It shows him how to accommodate himself to others, how to throw himself into their state of mind, how to bring before them his own, how to influence them, how to come to an understanding with them, how to bear with them.[321]

While some contend that Newman's ideals and vision reflect the lofty aspirations of a bygone age, it is surprising to see the current Australian Prime Minister and affirmed member of the Pentecostal community among them. Rather than (use aspects of Newman's claims) the recent higher education reforms brought forward by the Government, and specifically, the Job-Ready Graduates Package, seem to affirm that the function and purpose of universities are to produce people qualified to take jobs in what is identified as important industries; industries that do not include Ministry. According to the Government statement on the Reforms and the Job Rady Graduates Package, "The changes will deliver more job-ready graduates in the disciplines and regions where they are needed most and help drive the nation's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic."[322] Ultimately, this means,

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[321] John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 125–126.

[322] Australian Government: Department of Education, Skills and Employment, "Job-Ready Graduates Package," December 21, 2021, accessed January 12, 2022, https://www.dese.gov.au/job-ready.

in practice, that universities are expected (and required) to function as places that churn out graduates in line with economic needs. Government funding toward university courses is being overhauled to ensure this is the path followed. Students who undertake degrees resulting in graduates meeting workplace needs will see their contribution of fees decreased, while students who undertake degrees that are not going to set them up as "job-ready" will see their contribution of fees increased.[323] The National Union of Students (NUS) gets directly to the implications of these reforms in the following statement, "Universities are not job factories, and tailoring fees around that premise will hurt our sector in a time where we are already facing billions of dollars lost and hundreds of staff cuts".[324] So, it would seem, gone is the belief in the intrinsic value of education itself.

Though it is beyond the scope of this thesis to analyse the university's proper contemporary place and purpose, this is undoubtedly a question of the utmost importance for any institution solidifying its place within the Australian higher education system, particularly in the current political climate.

4.4 Summary

From the survey undertaken above, it seems that classical Pentecostalism in Australia emerged along a specific trajectory that is quite different from the North American and

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[323] Andrew Norton, "3 Flaws in Job-Ready Graduates Package Will Add to the Turmoil in Australian Higher Education," *The Conversation*, October 9, 2020, accessed January 12, 2022, https://theconversation.com/3-flaws-in-job-ready-graduates-package-will-add-to-the-turmoil-in-australian-higher-education-147740.

[324] Conor Duffy, "University Fees to Be Overhauled, Some Course Costs to Double as Domestic Student Places Boosted," *ABC News*, June 19, 2020, accessed January 12, 2022, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-06-19/university-fees-tertiary-education-overhaul-course-costs/12367742.

British contexts. Awareness of their history may facilitate Pentecostals in Australia to appreciate a shared identity and a sense of belonging. According to Jean-Daniel Plüss, faith and cultural traditions combine over an extended period with little distinction between either, giving Pentecostals a stronger sense of identity.[325] However, any identity fashioned by past experience is much like a double-edged sword. Plüss remarks, "On the one hand, it can serve as a powerful reminder that functions as a foundational myth. On the other hand, it can also hinder progress because it always looks to the past, easily disregarding present developments and future challenges."[326]

While there is a difference between the development of Australian classical Pentecostalism and its western counterparts, one must be equally attentive to the similarity that also exists, predominantly around the beliefs each share. The ACC's beliefs[327] are communicated in individual churches via preaching, but these beliefs are equally communicated via AC. Furthermore, as the national training college of the ACC, AC aligns itself with the ACC on a doctrinal basis[328]. There is an expectation that these beliefs are reflected in curriculum design and delivery, pointing to a particular way of doing things designed to generate specific and even pre-determined outcomes. If this is the case, then the outcomes do not fully engage with, nor are they cognisant of the context/s in which they are to be realised.[329] A function of such outcomes, if not an intentional part of their design, is a sharpening of a boundary between "them" and "us":

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[325] Jean-Daniel Plüss, "Pentecostals between Keeping Their Identity and Adapting to Change: A Study of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Switzerland 1907–2015," *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 36, no. 1 (January 2, 2016): 13.

[326] Ibid.

[327] The beliefs are listed on the ACC website, https://www.acc.org.au/.

[328] See AC's website https://www.ac.edu.au/about/what-we-believe/

[329] Explore and introduce - the Vatican II "reading the signs of the times"

Here, the category Pentecostal excludes alterity as opposed to acknowledging, engaging, or encompassing it.

I think this is evident when we consider Newman's ideals as providing a template for the role and function of a university in society. However, recent Government Reforms (led by arch-Pentecostal advocate Scott Morrison) seem to run counter to these ideals. There is an alignment between the ACC and AC – an alignment founded upon beliefs and ideals that can inform practice and participation in the world. This is to be evidenced in specific Course Level Learning Outcomes. If said Outcomes are to support Newman's ideal of active and contributory participation in the broader world and with other people, then that is not what they do; there is a disconnect between the intended Outcome and the context where that Outcome is to be realised. The AC graduate is not destined to work within and with the wider world but somewhat against it! Interestingly, this may reflect a heightened eschatology!

Until the 1970s, Pentecostals were self-assured of a pragmatic hermeneutical practice. According to Fee, that practice can be defined as; "obey what should be taken literally, spiritualize, allegorize, or devotionalize the rest."[330] However, in recent decades, Pentecostal scholars have engaged more fully with hermeneutics and the hermeneutical debate. They have begun to reflect more critically on their practice of biblical interpretation. I suggest that this critical reflection is illustrated by the growth of

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[330] Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 86.

Pentecostal scholarship that has slowly emerged in the last 50 years, not to mention the university aspiration of AC.[331]

Having canvased Pentecostalism more broadly and the distinctiveness of Australian Pentecostalism more specifically, the initial observation that gave impetus to this thesis, that of perceived tension between the worlds of the Pentecostal academy and of Pentecostal practice, can be better observed as a tangible tension that has developed alongside Pentecostalism surreptitiously. When we examine the development and diversity that makes Pentecostalism what it is, it becomes further apparent that there is a tangible and anomalous divergence between what are otherwise two sides of the same Pentecostal coin: the academic study of the Bible and the use of the Bible in ministerial roles. Between critique and conviction. Interestingly, this divergence is something of an enigma that has developed like an undercurrent alongside the very development of Pentecostalism as a movement. As such, it becomes necessary to explore the emergence of Pentecostal's academic engagement with the biblical text and examine the hermeneutical orientations throughout the development of Pentecostalism.

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[331] Speaking from the North American context, Amos Yong notes three waves of Pentecostal scholarship which have emerged since the 1960's. The first wave was the Pentecostal historians wishing to preserve the early eyewitness' accounts before they died. The second wave was the Pentecostal biblical scholars, who began to receive doctorates in the 1970's. The third wave consisted of the Pentecostal theologian, earning doctorates within the last two decades. Amos Yong, "Pentecostalism and the Theological Academy," *Theology Today* 64 (2007): 245-48.

Chapter Five: Pentecostal Hermeneutics and the Historical-Critical Method

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explored the notion that Pentecostals have traditionally been wary of principled learning around and about the Bible. Early Pentecostals believed that "overthinking" caused a lifeless spirituality devoid of the Holy Spirit. The lack of critical reflection of the biblical text in favour of Spirit-experience led to and encouraged a general anti-intellectual disposition that is often taken as being representative or defining of the movement.[1] While this may be essentially a matter of stereotyping, as was noted in chapter four, under the discussion of essentialism, this apparent anti-intellectual orientation nonetheless holds force. Furthermore, as discussed in the previous chapter, academic engagement with the biblical text was not unknown within the wider Pentecostal movement. Indeed, from its very beginnings, the value and significance of such an engagement were known and understood.

Nevertheless, I suggest that an understanding of the character of that engagement has not previously been explored or examined in detail. Hence, this chapter will examine

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[1] Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 20; Harlyn Graydon Purdy, *A Distinct Twenty-First-Century Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, ebook. (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 24. Grey notes, "the anti-intellectualism of early Pentecostals was not intrinsic to their theology, but rather driven by their ecclesiological isolation. Born in the fight of mainline denominations over theological modernism and fundamentalism, Pentecostals incorporated "theological modernism" as an element of "the world" which their spiritual dualism rejected…What they rejected were intellectuals as a class claiming the right to judge the church, and intellectualism as a process which undermined certainty." Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 20; Jeffrey S. Hittenberger, "Toward a Pentecostal Philosophy of Education," *Pneuma* 23, no. 1 (2001): 237.

the hermeneutical orientations, practices and processes that defined the *early*, *modern*, and *contemporary* periods of Pentecostalism, respectively, along with an assessment of the association and influence of evangelicalism. Furthermore, the chapter will discuss those elements that constitute Pentecostal biblical hermeneutics. Given that the object of Pentecostal hermeneutics is the biblical text and an approach to that text is often specified as the Historical-Critical Method, the chapter will conclude with an exploration of the key principles of the Historical-Critical Method and how it has been understood and adopted within the tradition.

Exploration of the Historical-Critical Method will first highlight the broad reasoning behind the state of Pentecostal hermeneutics, that is, how Pentecostals interpret the biblical text as they do, and second, highlight potential tensions between Pentecostal identity and Pentecostal hermeneutics. In highlighting these tensions, it will become evident that we need to consider whether it would be prudent for Pentecostals to re-evaluate the possibility of the pre-dominant methods in their hermeneutic arsenal with their values as a community.

5.2 Definitions

5.2.1 Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism

Before exploring a Pentecostal hermeneutic, it is necessary to consider two related but distinct terms Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism. It is no small task to proffer a definition of fundamentalism or evangelicalism. The lines between the two are often

blurred, making it challenging to isolate each neatly. Indeed, one might say aligning the two is something of a pre-conception. Furthermore, referring back to my earlier analysis of categories in discussing Pentecostalism, it must be said that the same insights are applicable here also. Thus, in the opening pages of James Barr's work on fundamentalism, appropriately entitled *Fundamentalism*[2], he remarks, "Complex social and religious movements [such as fundamentalism] cannot be defined in a few words"[3]. Though this may well be accurate, for the purpose of this thesis, the term *fundamentalism* is limited in reference to a movement of theologically conservative Protestant churches prominent in North America, particularly throughout the 1920s.[4] According to Synan,

> "…fundamentalism arose as a reaction to the liberal teachings of 19th-century higher criticism and the subsequent movement known as modernism. Fundamentalists saw themselves as defenders of orthodox Christianity against those in the churches who were attempting to accommodate the faith to the realities of the modern world."[5]

Barr suggests using the image of three concentric circles to understand fundamentalism within its religious context. Within this analogy, the outermost circle is Evangelicalism, the intermediate circle is Conservative Evangelicalism, and the innermost circle is Fundamentalism.[6] According to Barr, if we consider the outermost circle of evangelical religion, in which the general religious context of fundamentalism is found, it is much like the Pietism of continental Europe. Evangelical religion principally stresses

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[2] James Barr, *Fundamentalism* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1977). A substantial book of over 400 pages that covers various perspectives of fundamentalism across North America and Europe.

[3] Ibid., 1.

[4] Vinson Synan, "Fundamentalism," ed. Stanley M. Burgess, *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), 655.

[5] Ibid.

[6] James Barr, "Religious Fundamentalism," *St. Mark's Review*, no. 133 (1988): 4.

"personal faith and striving for salvation, the sense of sin and need for salvation, personal involvement and appropriation of the grace of God."[7] Often cited, David Bebbington highlights four qualities of the Evangelical religion that he views as a priority, conversionism, activism, biblicism, and crucicentrism. Conversionism focuses on a life-changing religious experience; activism focuses on the responsibility of sharing the gospel; biblicism concerns the authority of the Bible; and finally, crucicentrism stresses Christ's redeeming work on the Cross.[8]

Employing Barr's analogy of concentric circles, the intermediate circle reminds one that evangelicalism is not always conservative. As a subset of evangelicalism, Conservative Evangelicalism shares its perceptions held within the traditional orthodoxy of Protestantism.[9] According to Barr,

> [These] orthodoxies include such principles as the total depravity of man [sic], the absolute centrality of scripture, sometimes predestination; they also include elements like Trinity and Incarnation which are shared with more Catholic Christianity. According to this point of view, one cannot be truly Evangelical unless one is also *conservative* in opposing all sorts of modern ideas and modes of interpretation. [10]

The innermost circle found within Conservative Evangelicalism, Fundamentalism, insists that the conservative position can only be maintained based on a commitment to

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[7] Ibid. A basic perception of evangelical religion is that one can be a 'nominal' Christian, attend church and go through the motions externally but do all this only 'nominally': only by personal conversion to a real and inward experience does one become a real or true Christian. Ibid.

[8] David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1995), 2–19. Also see Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1994), 8.

[9] Barr, "Religious Fundamentalism," 4.

[10] Ibid.

the complete inerrancy, infallibility and absolute centrality of the Bible is viewed as the

final and complete authority for faith and practice.[11] Barr remarks that

> …fundamentalism does within Protestantism something similar to what Luther and Calvin found reprehensible when it happened within late mediaeval Catholicism: it reads a set of human religious traditions, in this case more or less orthodox Protestant and evangelical traditions, into the Bible, and thus uses the authority of the Bible to enforce these traditions upon the minds of people. Or, to put it another way, when modern and critical study of the Bible began to reveal that the Bible meant something different, fundamentalism acted to prevent this from having effect. Thus, fundamentalism does not ask after the real meaning of biblical texts. Rather, it uses the *principle* of biblical infallibility as a shield in order to guard the survival of a set of interpretations accepted in its own tradition.[12]

As we turn to Pentecostal hermeneutics, it will become evident that both

Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism have had more than an incidental impact on how

Pentecostals have approached the biblical text. Indeed, many of the pre-conceptions held

by Pentecostals that directly impinge on the interpretation of the Bible find a discernible

origin in the commitments of Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism.

5.3 Pentecostal Hermeneutics

"A person who has a horizon knows the relative significance of everything within this horizon, whether it is near or far, great or small. Similarly, working out the hermeneutical situation means acquiring the right horizon of inquiry for the questions evoked by the encounter with tradition."

Hans-Georg Gadamer*, Truth and Method*, 301-302

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[11] Ibid.; Synan, "Fundamentalism," 655. Synan notes that, "Fundamentalism also preached a rigorous lifestyle that often precluded the use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and attendance at places of "worldly amusement" such as the stage and, later, movie theatres." Ibid., 655.

[12] Barr, "Religious Fundamentalism," 7.

An essential insight derived from the hermeneutical framework articulated by Gadamer is that of the embeddedness of readers in the history and interpretation of the text they are interpreting. As noted in chapter three, it is a perspective that gives a distinct view of the world, a view embedded within a specific cultural trajectory and place in history. This awareness allows one to reflect upon prejudices critically and potentially expand one's informed horizon of understanding. The challenge comes when there is uncertainty about the specificity and nature of the precise vantage point that informs the initial horizon of understanding. Much like the Archimedean Point, the question becomes, where should one stand so that all things may flow?

For early Pentecostals, this datum point for an understanding of the biblical text is located in the Holiness traditions and revivalism of the late nineteenth century.[13] According to Archer, Pentecostals agreed with Holiness Christians' understanding of the gospel and added Baptism in the Holy Spirit to the initial evidence of glossolalia.[14] As already detailed earlier, for the Pentecostal tradition, there is an expectation of an encounter with God in the practice of Bible reading.[15] It is a reading approach primarily

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[13] Kenneth J. Archer, "Pentecostal Biblical Interpretation," in *Issues in Contemporary Pentecostalism*, ed. R. Keith Whitt and French L. Arrington (Cleveland, Tennessee: Pathway Press, 2012), 168.

[14] Specifically, the affirmation of regeneration, divine healing and sanctification, and the imminent return of Jesus Christ. Ibid.

[15] Although it must be emphasised that in no way is the dynamic experience of the Spirit limited to Pentecostals. Craig Keener observes that, "Elements that characterize a good "Pentecostal" hermeneutic are elements that should characterise any truly Christian and Spirit-led hermeneutic. That is, it is "Pentecostal" in the sense that all of us as Christians should read from a vantage of Pentecost and experience of the Spirit." Craig S. Keener, *Spirit Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture in Light of Pentecost* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2016), 3.

informed by the Book of Acts and its interpretation.[16] Archer identifies three stages in the development of Pentecostal biblical interpretation, each stage spanning approximately 40 years. The first stage, the *early period*, begins around 1900, followed by the *modern period* and the *contemporary periods,* respectively.[17]

5.3.1. The *Early Period*

During the *early period* of Pentecostalism, there was a shift in traditional biblical scholarship due to the impact of what is widely known as the "higher criticism". Higher Criticism and, specifically, the principles of historical and literary approaches it advocated prompted the notion of neutrality in interpreting Scripture. Before this shift, the dominant Pentecostal belief was that anyone could interpret scripture by employing common sense and the inductive method.[18] However, "objective" hermeneutics became desirable once Higher Criticism advocated acquiring specific skills and adopting specific methods to interpret the biblical text.

According to Purdy,

> Conservative Protestants saw the Bible as a book of propositions, truth, and facts, all of which could be comprehended and apprehended by ordinary persons. As higher criticism gained ground among the academies the idea that the common person could interpret Scripture lost ground.[19]

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[16] See the following sections 3.1 Introduction; 4.2.2 Priority of Testimony; 4.2.4 Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

[17] Kenneth J. Archer, "Pentecostal Biblical Interpretation," 168.

[18] Purdy, *A Distinct Twenty-First-Century Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 54; Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture, and Community*, 62.

[19] Purdy, *A Distinct Twenty-First-Century Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 54.

Unlike mainline Protestant denominations, Pentecostals did not initially adopt higher criticism and the historical-grammatical method of biblical interpretation.[20] However, in their efforts to explain or even understand Scripture, Pentecostals were initially attracted to conservative Christianity and its particular brand of fundamentalism and Evangelicalism. Consequently, Pentecostals adopted much of the language and theological statements of conservative Christianity, particularly concerning the authority and interpretation of Scripture.[21] According to Synan, "Although disagreeing with the cessationist teaching of the dispensationalists, most pentecostals during the 1920s and 1930s thought of themselves as fundamentalists "with a difference."[22] Leading up to WWI, liberalism was of little significance; however, during the 1920s, its influence began to grow significantly. Although many fundamentalist denominations opposed and feared the new views, many theologians and seminaries began to side with the modernists.[23] Grey notes, "The Pentecostal community, particularly in North America, was also caught up in the fundamentalist/modernist debate... Like most conservative sectors within Christianity during this time, Pentecostals have continued to emphasize the authority and reliability of the Bible."[24]

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[20] Ibid., 25.

[21] Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 130.

[22] Synan, "Fundamentalism," 657.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Grey, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture with Spirit in Community," 130–131.

The conflict between fundamentalists and modernists came to a head in 1925 during the famous Scopes trial.[25] The trial's outcome seemed to have discredited fundamentalism as ignorant and anti-intellectual. Generally, scholars ridiculed fundamentalism, and it was not studied significantly.[26] Following the Scopes trial, Synan notes that "fundamentalists largely abandoned the seminaries and universities to the modernists and concentrated on building Bible institutes where their faith would be safe from the glare of the liberal media and the intellectuals."[27] While fundamentalists had lost some confidence and retreated from the broader culture, they took the opportunity to redefine their faith in spiritual rather than intellectual terms. The "remodelling" that was needed to survive the Scopes trial was found and displayed in the vitality and energy of pentecostalism.[28] Fundamentalism not only survived the Scopes trial, which alerted people to its influence but also continued in a moderate form through various forms of evangelicalism in the following decades.[29] In the 1930s and 40s leading up to the *modern period,* the "newer" theological trends were strongly biblical without necessarily being literalistic or traditionally conservative. According to Barr, these trends generally supported the more modern and critical approaches to the Bible.[30]

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[25] Barr, "Religious Fundamentalism," 3. Barr offers the following précis of the trial, "In response to pressure from militant protestant fundamentalists the legislature of Tennessee in 1925 passed a law which in effect made it illegal to teach the theory of evolution in public schools. A high school biology teacher, John T. Scopes, was found guilty of teaching the theory but his conviction was later quashed by an appeal court on a technicality. Ibid., 3

[26] Barr, "Religious Fundamentalism," 3.

[27] Synan, "Fundamentalism," 657.

[28] Gerald W. King, *Disfellowshiped: Pentecostal Responses to Fundamentalism in the United States, 1906-1943*, 164 (Eugene, Or: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 200.

[29] Synan, "Fundamentalism," 657. Oliverio notes, "In general, the Pentecostal affirmation of the "fundamentals" took place because they allied themselves with the conservatives during the Fundamentalist-Modernist debates of the early twentieth century, and not because the "fundamentals themselves were the main focus of their own theological agenda." L. William Oliverio Jr, *Theological Hermeneutics in the Classical Pentecostal Tradition: A Typological Account* (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 20102), 108.

[30] Barr, "Religious Fundamentalism," 3.

5.3.2. The *Modern Period*

Much of the existing theological categories and methods related to academic hermeneutics embraced by Pentecostal scholarship have been adopted from the Evangelicals, particularly those developed in the context of Fundamentalism[31], simply as they are a group most analogous to Pentecostals. During the *modern period*, Pentecostals began to seek formal academic learning within accredited academic institutes and gain higher degrees in religious and biblical studies.[32] This pursuit helped Pentecostals establish a level of academic credibility and acceptance. King notes this as one of the two primary areas where Pentecostals felt inferior to fundamentalists despite their (Pentecostal) conviction that they had a superior gift to offer.[33] He states, "Fundamentalism represented an intellectual validity and enjoyed a broad cultural appeal that they [Pentecostals] lacked."[34] Pentecostals heavily engaged with and consumed fundamentalist writings and general literature adopting much of its theology as a framework for its endeavours. Pentecostals also desired respect from fundamentalists, hoping that the evangelical leaders of the day would perhaps admire or even esteem them on moral grounds.[35]

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[31] Jacqueline Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 37; Mathew S. Clark, "An Investigation into the Nature of a Viable Pentecostal Hermeneutic" (D.Th., South Africa, 1996), 53.

[32] Kenneth J. Archer, "Pentecostal Biblical Interpretation," 168. While this timeline is sequential, 1900-1940, 1940-1980, and 1980-present, Archer does acknowledge an element of overlap. Ibid.

[33] King, *Disfellowshiped*, 200.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

As detailed below, the beginning of the *modern period* comprised an alliance between Pentecostals and the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) in the North American context. Leading up to this alliance, the "orientation" towards ecumenism (what some might call an attempt to "accommodate") of the first generation of Pentecostals resulted in a kind of homelessness or orphan status for its adherents. Desiring to gain visibility and respectability, they sought "to be like" or, to work with others.[36] While there was a desire for Pentecostals to "belong" and be accepted by other Christians,[37] Yong explains, "[Pentecostals were] rejected by fundamentalists on the right who were convinced that charismatic gifts had ceased with the apostles, and by liberals on the left who had "outgrown" supernaturalistic Christianity."[38] More broadly, Christendom set Pentecostals apart as a distinct group; even the Holiness movement considered them heretical.[39] According to Cheryl Bridges Johns,

> [Pentecostals] expressed both a genuine desire for wider Christian fellowship and an awareness of the movement's own marginality. However, rejection from the established churches had created a pervading sense of fear and an exaggerated self-consciousness. Pentecostals were in need of a peer group, but one which was safe, which would mirror back to the participants in the movement a larger identity and provide wider social experiences beyond the "familiar" boundaries.[40]

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[36] Cecil M. Robeck Jr., "National Association of Evangelicals (NAE)," ed. Stanley M. Burgess, *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), 924.

[37] Cheryl Bridges Johns, "The Adolescence of Pentecostalism: In Search of a Legitimate Sectarian Identity," *Pneuma* 17, no. 1 (1995): 6.

[38] Yong, "Pentecostalism and the Theological Academy," 244.

[39] Purdy, *A Distinct Twenty-First-Century Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 23.

[40] Bridges Johns, "The Adolescence of Pentecostalism," 6.

In 1942, the newly formed NAE[41] in the United States provided Pentecostals with such a group. The NAE is understood to be the brainchild of James Elwin Wright.[42] Robeck notes, "In 1929 [Wright]…launched the New England Fellowship (NEF) to bring a modicum of cohesiveness to isolated conservative Christians who felt lonely in the seemingly theologically hostile and dominantly Roman Catholic world of New England."[43] Wright's NEF struck a chord with other evangelicals, and by the beginning of WWII, he travelled the continent promoting the idea of fellowship.[44] Wright visited many leaders personally and included Pentecostals in the conversation as he had done in the NEF.[45] A National Conference for United Action among Evangelicals was held in 1942 to deliberate on evangelicals' concerns and commonalities.[46] Several pentecostal traditions expressed immediate interest, recognising it as an extended hand of fellowship.[47] Of the 150 delegates who attended the conference, approximately 10% were pentecostals. [48]

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[41] "An association of evangelical, Holiness, and pentecostal individuals, local churches, and denominations, formed…to provide visibility and advocacy for the concerns of conservative Christians in the U.S" .Robeck Jr., "National Association of Evangelicals (NAE)," 923.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Heather Gonzales, "Evangelicals," *NAE's Beginnings: Seeking a Thoughtful Middleway*, February 2018, accessed December 21, 2021, https://www.nae.org/naes-beginning/.

[45] Robeck Jr., "National Association of Evangelicals (NAE)," 923.

[46] Ibid. Essentially, its purpose was to demonstrate a united front to both government agencies and unbelievers that they were willing collectively to stand against unbelief and apostasy. Ibid.

[47] Yong, "Pentecostalism and the Theological Academy," 244.

[48] The pentecostal groups included the Pentecostal Holiness Church (PHC), Open Bible Standard Churches (OBSC), the Church of God (Cleveland, TN; CG), and the Assemblies of God (AG). Robeck Jr., "National Association of Evangelicals (NAE)," 923. Gerald King notes, "Significantly, no representative from the Foursquare Gospel was invited until 1945, the year after Sister Aimee died. As a woman and a divorcée, she had two strikes against. She had also long been a divisive figure among pentecostals and fundamentalists alike because of her on- and off-stage antics. She did not fit the image of propriety that evangelicals wished to portray." King, *Disfellowshiped*, 199–200.

Some evangelicals were initially divided in their affiliation with pentecostals. The issue of pentecostal participation peaked in 1944, following the publication of several articles in the *Christian Beacon* that rejected "Tongues". The articles argued that the gift of tongues had ceased long ago and that it was one of the signs of apostasy.[49] According to King, some believed pentecostalism to be "a demonic movement designed to derail true Christianity from its course and every bit as evil as modernism."[50] However, many viewed modernism as the more significant threat and were willing to partner with pentecostals.[51] Harold Ockenga, a notable evangelical leader, argued that pentecostal and Holiness groups should have an equal voice alongside others who identified as evangelical. According to Robeck, Ockenga was still defending his decision to allow pentecostal participation as late as 1947, by which time Pentecostals were committed to stay.[52]

These early associations, particularly with Protestant Evangelicalism in the 1940s, led to a theological dependency that exerted significant influence over Pentecostals.[53] Via these associations, Pentecostals entered the academy and began to employ the "proper exegetical method", considered academically sound; these were essentially objective and scientific methods.[54] While the historical-critical method of modernity became the practised approach of Pentecostals in the academy, according to Archer, they rejected the naturalistic worldview and liberal theology of modernity, thus accepting and

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[49] Robeck Jr., "National Association of Evangelicals (NAE)," 923.

[50] King, *Disfellowshiped*, 200.

[51] Ibid.; Robeck Jr., "National Association of Evangelicals (NAE)," 923.

[52] Robeck Jr., "National Association of Evangelicals (NAE)," 923.

[53] Grey, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture with Spirit in Community," 131.

[54] Kenneth J Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture, and Community* (Cleveland, Tennessee: CPT Press, 2009), 177. Archer notes that it was this method that was ultimately called upon to judge conflicting interpretations. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture, and Community*, 177.

adopting a significantly modified version of historical criticism.[55] However, Pentecostals did acknowledge the significance of the substantive "gaps" in Scripture, such as historical, linguistic, cultural, social and geographical context, an understanding and appreciation of which could provide insight into the biblical text.[56] Archer notes, " When interpreting the final form of the biblical text for preaching, teaching, and doctrinal development, Pentecostals used an interpretive approach called the *historical-grammatical* method."[57] The goal of the *historical-grammatical* method was to establish the author's intended meaning and then apply it to one's current situation. The application is inferred from a "biblical" principle from which a moral principle is gleaned. The *moral principle* is drawn from a broad theological concept understood as an eternal truth.[58] According to Archer, "The text had one past determinate meaning; however, that one past meaning had multiple applications."[59]

During the *modern period*, many Pentecostals primarily employed the *historical-grammatical* method, and as Archer points out, to some degree, in the *contemporary period*, many still do.[60] While considered a form of historical criticism, the method avoided many of the profound philosophical and theological questions associated with historical criticism.[61] According to Gerald Bray, this is the main weakness of the historical-

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[55] Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 177.

[56] Kenneth J. Archer, "Pentecostal Biblical Interpretation," 170.

[57] Ibid. For more on this method see Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past & Present* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 354–356.

[58] Archer, "Pentecostal Biblical Interpretation," 170.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Bray, *Biblical Interpretation*, 354. The *historical-grammatical* method

grammatical method favoured by Pentecostals; without deeper philosophical and theological engagement, it could not engage with its critics.[62]

The developing association with Protestant Evangelicalism influenced Pentecostal interpretative approaches as the Pentecostal community relied more heavily on the partnership.[63] Grey notes,

> theologically, the influence of dispensationalism on the Pentecostal community in North America from the 1930s to the 1980s…tended to shift some of the focus of the purpose of reading Scripture from encountering God to the purpose of establishing doctrine. Greater emphasis was placed on proper principles of hermeneutics, including increased focus on the historical and cultural contexts in which the texts were written.[64]

Pentecostal scholars Robert Menzies and Gordon Fee represent this group preferring Evangelical categories.[65] Fee asserts that "evangelical hermeneutics in the years ahead

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[62] Ibid., 355. According to Bray, detailed textual exegesis could not explain the meaning of the text or how it in fact had come into being. Ibid.

[63] Jacqueline Grey, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture with the Spirit in Community," in *The Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology*, ed. Wolfgang Vondey (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2020), 131.

[64] Ibid. One can see an alignment with wider practices in biblical scholarship here also. For example, if we look to the dominant trends in biblical scholarship in the 1930s and 1940s, we see the German/European approach epitomised by Martin Noth and, the American approach seen in the works of W. F. Albright.

[65] See Robert P. Menzies, "Jumping Off the Postmodern Bandwagon," *Pneuma* 16, no. 1 (1994): 115–120; Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. Mathew Clark remarks that "It is …noticeable how many North American pentecostal theologians refer to themselves as 'evangelical'." Clark, "An Investigation into the Nature of a Viable Pentecostal Hermeneutic," 54. Similar to Archer, Cargal notes this evangelicalisation of Pentecostals is in part due to those " the absence of any Pentecostal institutions which offered advanced theological degrees, many [Pentecostals who pursued higher education] would become the teachers at Pentecostal Bible institutes and, later, colleges took at least their initial graduate theological training from Evangelical institutions such as Westminster, Wheaton, Gordon-Conwell and Fuller The choice of such institutions both resulted from and contributed to an increasing evangelization of classical Pentecostals in post-war America." Timothy B. Cargal, "Beyond the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy: Pentecostals and Hermeneutics in a Postmodern Age," *Pneuma* 15, no. 1 (1993): 169.

must increasingly think of Scripture less as law to be obeyed and more as gospel to be proclaimed"[66]. Menzies supports the evangelical approach contra to Timothy Cargal, who maintains that Pentecostals should distance themselves from the historical-critical method and develop newer postmodern hermeneutical approaches.[67] Cargal's suggestion is challenging to an Evangelical ear, as Evangelical categories circumvent any association with the plurality of postmodern approaches. For Menzies, the hermeneutical endeavour aims to discover singular historical meaning by establishing the author's intent in writing the text.[68] He asks, "If we lose the meaning of a text from its historical moorings, how shall we evaluate various and even contradictory interpretations? How shall we keep our own ideologies and prejudices from obliterating the text."[69] Menzies views the assimilation of the modern Pentecostal movement with the Evangelicals in a positive light.[70] Reflecting on Pentecostals joining the NAE, Fee describes it somewhat negatively as an "erosion" in the context of church and ministry.[71] He writes, "[d]espite protests to the contrary, we are now de facto a denomination of clerics…and, unfortunately, we have become a denomination of white, male clerics."[72] Archer and

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[66] Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 51. As noted in the previous chapter, while Australia does not attribute their origins to North America, one must not underestimate the influence of North American Pentecostalism. Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 37. Grey concludes, "As North American Pentecostalism is profoundly influenced by conservative Evangelicalism, its significance for Pentecostal reading approaches cannot be ignored." Ibid.

[67] Menzies, "Jumping Off the Postmodern Bandwagon," 119–120; Cargal, "Beyond the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy"; Purdy, *A Distinct Twenty-First-Century Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 9. See chapter 3 regarding postmodern readings.

[68] Menzies, "Jumping Off the Postmodern Bandwagon," 117. It is an interesting claim given that it is already a prejudice of sorts to make this claim, i.e., a conviction that knowing the origin of a thing gives one clear insight into its initial and hence, correct, meaning. Barton notes that "a historical-critical enquiry is guided by a desire to discover the facts as they actually are, as in Ranke's famous dictum that the historian's task is to establish the facts about the past 'as it actually was' (*wie es eigentlich gewesen).*" John Barton, "Historical Critical Approaches," in *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation*, ed. John Barton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 12.

[69] Menzies, "Jumping Off the Postmodern Bandwagon," 117.

[70] Ibid., 119.

[71] Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, xi.

[72] Ibid.

others also view the association with the Evangelicals in negative terms. Archer describes it "as destructive to Pentecostal experiential identity and doctrine"[73] and joins the minority voice which views the association with Evangelicals negatively.

Robeck summarises the losses and gains for Pentecostals as a consequence of aligning with the evangelicals. In addition, he notes several benefits for Pentecostals in joining the NAE. First, Pentecostals gained the visibility and respectability they desired from the evangelicals.[74] Second, "[P]entecostals have a larger voice in the public arena."[75] Third, the various groups within Pentecostalism recognised a need for dialogue, resulting in the formation of the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America (PFNA) in 1948. Fourth, there has been a "pentecostalization" of evangelicals, particularly those who were anti-pentecostal. This is particularly noticeable in changes to worship style and music.[76] King remarks, "[P]entecostalism has made it fashionable to raise one's hands in praise."[77] While the "pentecostalization" of evangelicals is viewed as a relatively recent occurrence, predominantly in the *contemporary period*,[78] Pentecostals have also experienced a reciprocal effect of the "evangelicalization", primarily between 1940 and 1980, the *modern period*.[79] For Pentecostals, aligning with the evangelicals has also had several adverse

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[73] Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 142. For Mark Mclean, "A strict adherence to traditional evangelical/fundamentalist hermeneutic principles leads to a position which, in its most positive forms, suggests the distinctives of the twentieth century Pentecostal movement are perhaps nice but not necessary; important but not vital to the life of the Church in the twentieth century. In its more negative forms, it leads to a total rejection of Pentecostal phenomena." Mark D. McLean, "Toward a Pentecostal Hermeneutic," *Pneuma* 6, no. 1 (1984): 37.

[74] Robeck Jr., "National Association of Evangelicals (NAE)," 924.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid.

[77] King, *Disfellowshiped*, 201.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid. Although King acknowledges the general "drift" into fundamentalism since the 1910s. He divides the "fundamentalization" of pentecostals between 1920-1940 and "evangelicalisation" between 1940-1980. Ibid.

effects, particularly the loss of the vitality of its witness and its distinct testimony to the work of the Holy Spirit.[80]

The shift from the *early period*[81] to the *modern period* consigns the role of experience to authenticating the hermeneutical process instead of informing it.[82] For those who claim a high view of Scripture, the Bible becomes a mere record of salvation history, albeit an accurate one.[83] Despite the evangelical view that the Holy Spirit inspired the Bible, "a high view of the text often maintained a low view of the Holy Spirit, relegating her role to inspiration of the text and mild illumination of the minds of readers."[84] Robeck also notes, "the doctrinal concerns of evangelicals have become the doctrinal concerns of pentecostals. Some pentecostal groups have rewritten their statements of faith, and others have imported such "evangelical" issues as "inerrancy" into their theological arenas for the first time."[85] Finally, Robeck highlights the slightly less overt shift away from supporting women in ministry.[86] The traditional role of women in ministry has been more significant in the pentecostal tradition when compared to the evangelical tradition, as is seen within the Australian context.[87] By adopting evangelical values, women's roles within

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[80] King, *Disfellowshiped*, 201.

[81] What Archer also describes as "paramodern". Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 38.

[82] Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture, and Community*, 141–142.

[83] Cheryl Bridges Johns, "Grieving, Brooding, Transforming: The Spirit, the Bible, and Gender," in *Grieving, Brooding, Transforming: The Spirit, the Bible, and Gender*, ed. Cheryl Bridges Johns and Lisa P. Stephenson, volume 46 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2021), 12.

[84] Ibid. While this may be true, Chan notes, The Pentecostal event cannot be divorced from history, or there would be no historical continuity of the vertical event. Herein lies the Achilles' heel of Pentecostalism: by freeing the Pentecostal event from its historical moorings, it has considerably weakened its capacity for traditioning. If truth can come directly from the Spirit, what need is there to check it against the historical Christian tradition? Simon Chan, "Mother Church: Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology," in *Pentecostal Ecclesiology: A Reader*, ed. Chris E. W. Green (Leiden Boston: Brill, 2016), 32.

[85] Robeck Jr., "National Association of Evangelicals (NAE)," 925.

[86] Ibid.

[87] See chapter 4, section 4.3.1

Pentecostal ministry have, in many ways, become marginalised through the *modern period* compared to the *early period*.[88]

While, on balance, there were distinct advantages to aligning with evangelicals, there were also disadvantages, as noted above. Oliverio observes that the loss of early Pentecost restorationist and premillennialist fervour caused Pentecostals to become more like the older and long-established denominations.[89] He further notes, "The Evangelical-Pentecostal hermeneutic is also characterized by the reduction in emphasis on the imminence of the parousia (sic), though the "Blessed Hope" of the Second Coming continued as a cardinal doctrine of the faith. The narrative of the Latter Rain receded."[90]

The new association with NAE in the *modern period* assisted in establishing Pentecostalism (as a recognisable and authoritative tradition). Pentecostals were given educational material and training within Evangelical higher education schools.[91] From a hermeneutical perspective, the learning within this new affiliation allowed Pentecostals to explore and understand their developing interpretive approach to the Bible. Oliverio notes the Pentecostal's turn to Evangelical hermeneutics, which sought to articulate Pentecostal doctrines by discerning, establishing and then employing grammatical details to comprehend the function of the biblical text.[92] While there was a turn toward a conservative

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[88] Robeck Jr., "National Association of Evangelicals (NAE)," 925.

[89] Edith L. Blumhofer cited by Oliverio Jr, *Theological Hermeneutics in the Classical Pentecostal Tradition: A Typological Account*, 87.

[90] Ibid., 87–88.

[91] Bridges Johns, "The Adolescence of Pentecostalism," 6.

[92] Oliverio Jr, *Theological Hermeneutics in the Classical Pentecostal Tradition: A Typological Account*, 130. See a summary of the work of Daniel Warren Kerr in Ibid., 88–103.

Protestant hermeneutic, this was offset by a strong emphasis on spiritual experience consistent with early Pentecostals. There was thus sufficient divergence to recognise Pentecostals as an emerging tradition in their own right, as opposed to a sub-category of an established and broader evangelical tradition. Furthermore, here again, we see a tension between the academic study of the Bible and the reliance on the Bible as a source of spirituality.

While in the *early period*, we see traces of an initial turn towards the hermeneutics of Evangelicalism, it was far from universal. It was not until the early part of the *modern period* that a similar hermeneutical need was recognised more broadly. The academic development from the *modern period* continued to the current or *contemporary period*, where much attention has been placed on hermeneutics, specifically, the development of a distinctive Pentecostal hermeneutic.[93]

5.3.3. The *Contemporary Period*

One may ask, was there or is there now a need for a distinct Pentecostal Hermeneutic? Purdy argues for a resounding "yes".[94] He offers the following reasons for his response, "Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal academic perspectives, contextual changes, the place

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[93] Archer, "Pentecostal Biblical Interpretation," 167–168. While this timeline is sequential, 1900-1940, 1940-1980, and 1980-present, Archer does acknowledge an element of overlap. Ibid., 168.

[94] Harlyn Graydon Purdy, *A Distinct Twenty-First-Century Pentecostal Hermeneutic* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 5.

of community in contemporary theory, and Pentecostalism's development over time."[95]

The question is also answered in the affirmative by others. Bradley Noel asserts

that "Pentecostals must pursue a distinctly Pentecostal hermeneutic...with a Pentecostal

sensitivity to the roles of narrative, community, and experience."[96] In the 1990s, Cecil

Robeck remarked, "I am not yet convinced that there is a unique Pentecostal

hermeneutic"[97]. He notes the urgency of developing it, reasoning that it was "Critical to

our [Pentecostal] survival".[98] Nearly two decades later, Archer echoes Robeck's

sentiment, asserting that Pentecostals must develop a distinctive hermeneutic to avoid

diminishing their identity and practice.[99] Furthermore, Robeck writes that Pentecostals

must be willing to engage in hermeneutical self-understanding; however, one cannot

assume that this is an antidote to the potential loss of Pentecostal identity.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, an allegiance with evangelicals provided

Pentecostalism something of a validation, yet, that validation brought with it the sceptre of

diminishment within the larger evangelical milieu, where Pentecostalism was merely one

of many. The need to stand apart is to be defined by and based upon something different to

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[95] Ibid.

[96] Bradley Truman Noel, *Pentecostal and Postmodern Hermeneutics: Comparison and Contemporary Impact* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2010), 174.

[97] Cecil M. Robeck Jr., "Taking Stock of Pentecostalism: The Personal Reflections of a Retiring Editor," *Pneuma* 15, no. 1 (1993): 60.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 3. It must be noted that scholars have entered the debate from an alternative perspective, one that denies "the need for a distinctive Pentecostal hermeneutic, preferring to follow certain evangelical models, to those who are in dialogue with a number of methodologies that have emerged within the last couple of decades. While no consensus has emerged as of yet, it appears that many scholars working within the Pentecostal tradition are less content to adopt a system of interpretation that is heavily slanted toward rationalism and has little room for the role of the Holy Spirit." John Christopher Thomas, "Women, Pentecostalism, and the Bible: An Experiment in Pentecostal Hermeneutics," in *Pentecostal Hermeneutics: A Reader*, ed. Lee Roy Martin (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013), 8.

that wider milieu. As Robeck mentioned, is that "something different best described as "hermeneutical self-understanding"? Perhaps it is instead a requirement to reflect on self and self-understanding, a task aided by a focused and critical engagement with the modes and methods of biblical interpretation acquired from the evangelicals.

For much of its brief history, the hermeneutical practice of Pentecostals has remained fundamentally unaltered. A Pentecostal identity and hermeneutical practice are only comprehensible when one considers the reader's story. It is a story that ultimately shapes their reading of the text.[100] Indeed, to speak about a *Pentecostal Hermeneutic* refers to a "distinction of emphasis and a uniqueness of perspective that shapes and orients interpretation."[101] Archer summarises the general view of scholars of the interpretative approach of early Pentecostals as "being 'literal', 'ahistorical', 'pietistic' or involving some combination of all three."[102] We might refer to such an interpretive approach as a "pragmatic hermeneutic."

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[100] Scott A. Ellington, "Locating Pentecostals at the Hermeneutical Round Table," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 22, no. 2 (2013): 207.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Kenneth J. Archer, "Early Pentecostal Biblical Interpretation," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 9, no. 18 (April 1, 2001): 32. Although Archer prefers the description pre-critical over pietistic. Ibid., 34–35. According to Archer "Pentecostals desire to show from Scripture how they have arrived at their theological position. Early Pentecostal used the 'Bible Reading Method' to arrive at the conclusion that Spirit baptism evidenced by speaking in tongues is rooted in Scripture, albeit a reading of Scripture from a Pentecostal perspective." Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century: Spirit Scripture and Community*, 187.

It would seem Pentecostals have continued in a pragmatic hermeneutic, or what Stronstad describes as the "pragmatic Pentecost-as-pattern hermeneutic."[103] According to Stronstad, this pragmatic hermeneutic was a function of a contemporary experience in the early twentieth century and was subsequently passed to the early Pentecostal movement as a tradition.[104] Similarly, Dayton notes, "Pentecostals read the account of Pentecost in Acts and insist that the general pattern of the early church's reception of the Spirit…must be replicated in the life of the individual believer."[105]

This inheritance of a pragmatic hermeneutic as tradition is significant in and of itself, given the notion of "horizon", as Gadamer specified earlier. Recall that "There is no more an isolated horizon of the present in itself than there are historical horizons that have to be acquired; understanding is always the fusion of these horizons."[106] How then, we delineate early Pentecostal hermeneutics, contemporary Pentecostal hermeneutics, and all that is in between, one might say, is a matter of an interplay between the horizons of the past and present, not forgetting that every horizon is essentially unable to stand by itself and cannot be formed apart from history. Furthermore, what we consider tradition is always a matter of *Wirkungsgeschichte.*

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[103] Roger Stronstad, *Spirit, Scripture and Theology: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Baguio, Philippines: Asia Pacific Theological Seminary Press, 1995), 17.

[104] Ibid. Flowing out of the Azusa Street tradition through the conviction of Charles Fox Parham, it was believed that the early Pentecostal movement's experience, "Should tally exactly with Bible…". Sarah E. Parham, *The Life of Charles F. Parham, Founder of the Apostolic Faith Movement*, Higher Christian life (Joplin: Missouri: Hunter Printing Company, 1930), 52.

[105] Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 23.

"In making this claim, Pentecostalism stands in a long tradition of a "subjectivizing hermeneutic." Ibid.

[106] Gadamer, Weinsheimer, and Marshall, *Truth and Method*, 305.

For Pentecostals, the traditional method of interpretation emphasises the immediacy of the text[107], which negates or ignores the substantive historical, linguistic, cultural, and geographical "gaps" noted earlier.[108] Cargal notes, "While these interpreters would assert the historical reliability of the narratives (on essentially pre-critical grounds),[109] the historical context does not materially contribute to their appropriation of the text since the dominant patterns of meaning tend to be typological."[110] This point highlights the difference between Pentecostals engaged in an academic setting rather than an ecclesial one. According to Purdy, those engaged in Pentecostal ministry, such as preaching, tend to engage in a traditional Pentecostal interpretation of the text, which is open to the Spirit's aid. It emphasises the immediacy of Scripture and acknowledges the dynamic and multiple possibilities of meaning.[111] However, scholars committed to the historical-grammatical method, such as Fee, Stronstad, and Menzies, do not readily accept the possibility of multiple meanings in a text.[112] Perhaps ironically, it seems that Pentecostals in ecclesial practice, that is, pastors and preachers, are aligned more closely with more recent developments in biblical scholarship in general than Pentecostals in the academy.[113] Purdy remarks,

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[107] Cargal, "Beyond the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy," 164. See chapter four section 4.2.2.

[108] See chapter 3 section 3.2.

[109] Cargal, "Beyond the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy," 164.

[110] Ibid.

[111] Purdy, *A Distinct Twenty-First-Century Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 18.

[112] Ibid.

[113] See chapter three, section 3.3.

The emphasis on the immediacy of the text and the possibility of multiple meanings among Pentecostal preachers and laity points to the growing gap between Pentecostal academics and Pentecostals in general. This suggests there is a genuine need to engage in the work of developing a distinctive Pentecostal hermeneutic for the twenty-first century.[114]

A little over a decade ago, John Christopher Thomas surveyed the development of Pentecostal Hermeneutics from the preceding four decades. He states that his article "focuses especially on approaches that appear to be most constructive."[115] He made several observations; first, it was evident that each attempt at constructing a Pentecostal hermeneutic was not bound by pre-existing theological frameworks into which a Pentecostal approach must easily slot or be "force-fitted." Rather, the various attempts demonstrated efforts to build from the ground up.[116] Second, the attempts were unlike "the approach of fundamentalism or even the evangelical use of historical criticism. Rather, they draw upon and are in dialogue with a variety of scholars and methodological approaches spanning the theological and interpretive landscape."[117] Third, each highlights the essential nature of the role of the Holy Spirit and God in the community within the interpretive process. Fourth, the communal context of the Pentecostal community is shown to be vital.[118] Finally, Thomas notes, "Scripture is viewed as dynamic and inviting, a veritable universe of terrain that awaits readers and hearers who

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[114] Purdy, *A Distinct Twenty-First-Century Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 18.

[115] John Christopher Thomas, "'Where the Spirit Leads' – the Development of Pentecostal Hermeneutics," *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 30, no. 3 (December 2009): 289. The following scholars are surveyed: Gerald T. Sheppard, Howard M. Ervin, Mark D. McLean, Russell Spittler, Rickie D. Moore, John McKay, J.C. Thomas, Larry R. McQueen, Kenneth J. Archer, Robby Waddell, and Lee Roy Martin. Ibid.

[116] John Christopher Thomas, "'Where the Spirit Leads' – the Development of Pentecostal Hermeneutics," *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 30, no. 3 (December 2009): 301.

[117] Ibid.

[118] Ibid.

identify with and long for the experiences to which Scripture and a variety of communities of the Spirit testify."[119]

Further to Thomas's summary, Oliverio considers the distinction between the *modern period* and the *contemporary period* of Evangelical-Pentecostal hermeneutics. In the *modern period*, interpreters began to focus on the internal context and history found within the text. The external context behind the text was not the focus, although it has much more attention in the *contemporary period*.[120]

While historical reconstruction safeguards against those who may fall into heretical beliefs or practices, doggedly pursuing authorial intent and the "proper" exegetical method in reconstructing the biblical text may place limitations on the meaning and the significance of the Holy Spirit's role in the interpretive process. For Pentecostals, Grey notes, "discovering the original intention of the author or the historical context is subordinate to the significance of the text to the contemporary reader."[121] This view is, in some ways, consistent with Ricœur's emphasis on the role of *Verfremdung*, which is not primarily concerned with the author of the text or the cultural condition under which he or she wrote.[122] As already noted by Grey earlier in this section, the Pentecostal reader does not entirely disregard the author's intent; it simply is not the primary focus.[123] The notion of distanciation can be as liberating for the Pentecostal reader as it was for

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[119] Ibid.

[120] Oliverio Jr, *Theological Hermeneutics in the Classical Pentecostal Tradition: A Typological Account*, 131.

[121] Jacqueline Grey, *Three's a Crowd*, 119

[122] See discussion on distanciation in chapter 2.

[123] See section 5.33

Ricœur, allowing the reader to understand themselves through what they are reading without an overarching concern for what might be the author's intention.

Nonetheless, a complete anti-intentionalist approach may be thought to be problematic for Pentecostals who identify themselves as belonging to a specific tradition, one that accepts continuity with the New Testament community. In accepting this *Zugehörigkeit* or continuity with a specific tradition, any reading of the biblical text must acknowledge how the various authors wanted their writings to be read.[124] Proponents of the historical-critical method are apprehensive about isolating the biblical text from its historical context due to the inherent possibility that such relativisation can produce extreme subjectivity of meaning.[125] However, as noted by Westphal in chapter 3, adopting such methods does not necessarily mean that *anything goes*.[126]

Pentecostals have earnestly critiqued the historical-critical method despite its dominance throughout biblical scholarship. Much of the critique is through postmodern ideals and an emphasis on the role of community in the reading process.[127] According to Grey, "Evangelical approaches are inconsistent with Pentecostalism and… limit the reader's encounter with the text to a rational, historical approach that contradicts the significance

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[124] B. Scott Lewis and John C. Poirier, "Pentecostal and Postmodernist Hermeneutics: A Critique of Three Conceits," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 15, no. 1 (2006): 15.

[125] Grey, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture with the Spirit in Community," 131.

[126] See chapter 3, specifically section 3.3 Contemporary Biblical Hermeneutics. Westphal offers reasons to resist this fear.

[127] Scott Ellington, "Pentecostalism and the Authority of Scripture," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 4, no. 9 (1996): 16–38; Bridges Johns, "Grieving, Brooding, Transforming: The Spirit, the Bible, and Gender"; Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*.

of pneumatic illumination valued by the Pentecostal community."[128] This becomes problematic for Pentecostals, as their community and the Holy Spirit are significant components of the interpretive reading process. However, this is to get ahead of ourselves; I will discuss the importance of community and the Holy Spirit for Pentecostal hermeneutics below.

Whatever we might currently identify as crucial elements within a Pentecostal Hermeneutic, for Keener, those elements should characterise all Christian and Spirit-led hermeneutics.[129] In this context, "Pentecostal" implies that all Christians should read from the perspective of Pentecost and the experience of the Spirit.[130] According to Grey, while Pentecostal scholars have found little consensus on a single reading approach reflecting their community's reading practices,[131] certain elements regularly occur. Typically, the three elements of focus when discussing Pentecostal engagement with scripture or Pentecostal biblical hermeneutics are Scripture, Spirit, and community, as per the work of Archer, Yong and others.[132] According to Marius Nel, these elements are characteristically understood as "the interrelationship between the *Holy Spirit* as the One animating *Scriptures* and empowering the *believing community*."[133] Grey also adds *experience* as an essential element of a Pentecostal interpretive method.[134]

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[128] Grey, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture with the Spirit in Community," 132.

[129] Keener, *Spirit Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture in Light of Pentecost*, 3.

[130] Ibid.

[131] Grey, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture with the Spirit in Community," 131.

[132] Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*; Amos Yong, "The Hermeneutical Trialectic: Notes Toward A Consensual Hermeneutic And Theological Method," *HeyJ* 45, no. 1 (January 2004): 22–39; Amos Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community: Theological Hermeneutics in Trinitarian Perspective* (Wipf and Stock, 2002).

[133] Marius Nel, "Attempting to Define a Pentecostal Hermeneutics," *Scriptura* 114, no. 1 (2015): 3.

[134] Grey, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture with the Spirit in Community," 129.

5.3.4 Experience

As previously noted,[135] a specific characteristic of Pentecostals is their focus on the experiential encounter with God. For this reason, they have long believed praying is more important than studying.[136] Essential to the Pentecostal worldview is a belief in God's interaction with and in the contemporary world. This confession leads to a high estimation of the value of experience and non-rational forms of knowing.[137] Peter Neumann asserts, "Pentecostals usually accent external expressions over an inward-focused orientation and tend to associate the Spirit's activity with what is palpably felt and tangibly observed."[138] While Pentecostals acknowledge that an "experience" is challenging to articulate, the experience of an encounter with God is affirmed within and by the community. Others are encouraged to seek a similar experience.[139] While the vocabulary to express the experience may be ineffable, biblical images and symbols are used to describe the Pentecostal experience.[140] Albrecht notes, "The biblical symbols provide the primary medium through which the community understands itself and communicates that understanding; biblical images contain and carry the Pentecostal spirituality."[141] This is interesting in terms of how symbols are themselves understood. As

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[135] See chapter 4, section 4.2.2.

[136] Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 14.

[137] Nel, "Attempting to Define a Pentecostal Hermeneutics," 8. According to Nel it is this worldview that fuels scepticism toward learning and higher education. Ibid.

[138] Peter D. Neumann, "Experience: The Mediated Immediacy of Encounter with the Spirit," in *The Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology*, ed. Wolfgang Vondey (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2020), 88.

[139] Ibid., 84.

[140] Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 16; ibid., 114.

[141] Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit*, 246.

much as communities are virtual repositories of symbols, symbols are repositories of multiple meanings. While communities share symbols, they do not necessarily share their meanings.[142] Each meaning "is mediated by the idiosyncratic experience of the individual."[143]

As Pentecostals bring an expectation of a spiritual experience to their reading of the text[144], the relational and dynamic nature of the reading experience results from a desire to be transformed through the encounter.[145] In this way and in tandem with previous personal experiences of divine encounters, relatability within the biblical text is sought. In a descriptive study undertaken within the Australian Pentecostal community that explored Bible reading methods, experience was identified as a critical element of the overall reading process.[146] Regarding the study, Grey notes, "Readers often began with a spiritual experience and sought the Scriptures to find resonances with, and understanding of, their parallel pneumatic encounter."[147] The pneumatic experience can be verbalised through imagery, experience or events. This process ultimately permits the Pentecostal interpreter to relate to and with the text as it mirrors something meaningful and significant in their lives.[148] We might even say that the reader looks to

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[142] Anthony Paul Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, ed. Peter Hamilton (London: Routledge, 1995), 15.

[143] Ibid., 14. See chapter one of Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*; Ian Hodder, *Symbols in Action: Ethnoarchaeological Studies of Material Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

[144] Nel, "Attempting to Define a Pentecostal Hermeneutics," 4.

[145] Ricœur also makes this point in terms of naiveté in reading. It is also essential in terms of a core principle of hermeneutical enquiry and insight, that of development and change. Speaking about the mediation between text and reader Ricœur states that "revelation and transformation, are essentially the effects of reading."Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative. Vol. 3.*, trans. David Pellauer and Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 101.

[146] Grey, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture with the Spirit in Community," 136.

[147] Ibid.

[148] Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 114.

find some equivalence with and then heightens the biblical text's voice. Pentecostal theology allows for, indeed encourages, and even promotes such an encounter with the Spirit.[149] As Grey writes,

> It is a dynamic interaction that is mutually informing: Scripture informs contemporary experience and experience informs the reading of Scripture. This cycle is grounded in the Pentecostal impetus to recover, restore, and experience the activity of the Spirit for the present day in continuity with the narrative of Scripture.[150]

While embracing the evangelical hermeneutical methods may have helped Pentecostals establish academic credibility and acceptance, a repercussion of the partnership, according to Neumann, was that it downplayed the significance of spiritual experience in the overall hermeneutical process.[151] Thus the tension became apparent. Although the Evangelical relationship may have deterred Pentecostals from engaging with and exploring dynamic and subjective possibilities between text and interpreter,[152] the goal for many Pentecostals remains the transformation of the interpreter through a divine encounter. A goal that can be verbalised by employing the language of the biblical text and recognising that the pneumatic experience is both the starting point of the reading process and the end result, the alpha and the omega.[153]

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[149] Grey, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture with the Spirit in Community," 136.

[150] Ibid.

[151] Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience: An Ecumenical Encounter*, 126.

[152] Ibid.

[153] Grey, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture with the Spirit in Community," 136.

For Pentecostals, interpretation of the biblical text is much more than an intellectual process to be studied in a detached manner. Rather it is constitutive of a lived response in relationship with the Holy Spirit. An experience that allows one to enter the apostolic age and encounter the actual presence of God. It is made possible by the "latter rain" of the Spirit, which allows twenty-first-century believers to share in the experiences of first-century believers.[154] Nel writes,

> A hermeneutic that focuses only on what the original author meant…do not satisfy Pentecostal sentiments, which assert that the spiritual and extraordinary supernatural experiences of biblical characters are to be duplicated for contemporary believers. A Pentecostal hermeneutic will always consider the Spirit's role and the impact of personal experience.[155]

5.3.5 Spirit

While every Christian tradition typically acknowledges, to a greater or lesser degree, the role of the Holy Spirit, Pentecostals claim a fundamental role of and for the Holy Spirit, a priority of place in their hermeneutic. Thomas notes,

> Unlike many of their Christian siblings, Pentecostals have had a keen interest in, and a place for the role of, the Holy Spirit in the interpretive process. For Pentecostals, it is indeed one of the oddities of modern theological scholarship that across the theological spectrum approaches to Scripture have little or no appreciation for the work of the Holy Spirit in interpretation.[156]

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[154] French L. Arrington, "Pentecostal Identity and Interpretation of the Bible," in *Issues in Contemporary Pentecostalism*, ed. R. Keith Whitt and French L. Arrington (Cleveland, Tennessee: Pathway Press, 2012), 17.

[155] Nel, "Attempting to Define a Pentecostal Hermeneutics," 15–16.

[156] John Christopher Thomas, "Reading the Bible from within Our Traditions: A Pentecostal Hermeneutic as Test Case," in *Between Two Horizons: Spanning New Testament Studies and Systematic Theology*, ed. Joel B. Green and Max Turner (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 109. However, if we consider the direct teaching of the Second Vatican Council on Scripture, *Dei Verbum:* Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, it makes reference to the help of the Spirit, it states: But the task of authentically interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed on, (8) has been entrusted exclusively to the living teaching office of the Church, (9) whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ. This teaching office is not above the word of God, but serves it, teaching only what has been handed on, listening to it devoutly, guarding it scrupulously and explaining it faithfully in accord with a divine commission and with the help of the Holy

The challenge often comes in sufficiently articulating the distinct nature of that engagement.[157] Pentecostals note three areas where the Holy Spirit is believed to be active concerning Scripture. First, in the inspired production of the text; second, in the transmission of the text; and third, in the interpretive process.[158]

For Pentecostals, the Spirit can illuminate passages of Scripture in new ways. As Scripture is given by the Spirit, it is best understood with the help of the Spirit.[159] The Holy Spirit illuminates[160] the biblical text to give the interpreter a deeper understanding. Arrington asserts, "The Spirit's illumination for the interpreter is a vital part of

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Spirit, it draws from this one deposit of faith everything which it presents for belief as divinely revealed. *Dei Verbum* 10. Vatican II Council, "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation: Dei Verbum.," November 18, 1965, accessed January 3, 2022, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html#. A document by the Pontifical Biblical Commission (explored in the next chapter), entitled, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church,* written in 1993 and presented to Pope John Paul II, states, "The church, as the people of God, is aware that it is helped by the Holy Spirit in its understanding and interpretation of Scripture." It also states, "From earliest times it has been understood that the same Holy Spirit, who moved the authors of the New Testament to put in writing the message of salvation (*Dei Verbum*, 7; 18), likewise provided the church with continual assistance for the interpretation of its inspired writings." The Pontifical Biblical Commission, "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church," 1993, accessed January 3, 2022, https://catholic-resources.org/ChurchDocs/PBC_Interp-FullText.htm.

[157] Purdy, *A Distinct Twenty-First-Century Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 103.

[158] Ibid., 104. See *Dei Verbum* (hereafter DV) for surprising similarity, particularly *DV*8 and *DV*11-3; IBC under the heading "Interpretation in the Tradition of the Church". The Pontifical Biblical Commission, "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church.". Also, antecedents to Vatican II for example such a *Providentissimus Deus* refer to the Holy Spirit as the primary guide for interpretation. See *Providentissimus Deus* under heading "Holy Scripture and Theology; Interpretation; the Fathers". Pope Leo XIII, "Providentissimus Deus: Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on the Study of the Holy Scriptures," November 18, 1893, accessed January 14, 2022, https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_18111893_providentissimus-deus.html.

[159] Arrington, "Pentecostal Identity and Interpretation of the Bible," 16. Grey, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture with the Spirit in Community," 135.

[160] Purdy notes, "It is important to point out here that the illumination of the Holy Spirit is available to every believer—Spirit baptized or not. The difference here is that Pentecostals assume experiential encounter is part of the interpretive activity while many evangelicals understand the illuminating work of the Spirit to occur under the surface in the exercise of historical-grammatical methodology." Purdy, *A Distinct Twenty-First-Century Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 110.

understanding the present-day meaning of the biblical text."[161] Any conversation around meaning, particularly the locus of meaning, leads to many more questions.[162] Ellington offers a summary of such questions,

> Does meaning reside with the Spirit-led author of a text and what they intend to communicate? Or…does meaning rest in the text as we have it, largely independent of what the author intended to communicate? Or, since the only way to access the meaning of any text is through a renewed hearing of it, and since the reader does so from a unique context that colors and shapes their understanding of the text, should meaning be located principally with the reader and their unique take on the text's meaning?[163]

While one must acknowledge the distance between the ancient authors and modern readers, the Holy Spirit is understood to overcome the "gap" to illuminate the ancient words for the twenty-first century. Archer argues for a Pentecostal hermeneutical strategy that focuses on both discovering meaning and its creation. He rejects the notion that meaning is determined solely by focusing on the author. For Pentecostals, the biblical text is more than an object to be interpreted; instead, it is a living Word through which the Spirit flows.[164] Via the Spirit, the biblical text awakens and becomes alive and can be read in such a way as to *speak* to individual situations with the possibility of personal transformation.[165] The role of the Holy Spirit is central to the Pentecostal reader

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[161] Arrington, "Pentecostal Identity and Interpretation of the Bible," 16. For Arrington, this deeper meaning is beyond human reason. He offers some suggestions as to how the interpreter relies on the Spirit's illumination: "(1) a personal experience of faith as part of the entire interpretative process; (2) submission of the mind to God so that the critical and analytical abilities are exercised under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; (3) a genuine openness to the Holy Spirit as the text is examined; (4) response to the transforming call of God's Word". Ibid., 17.

[162] Scott A. Ellington, "Hearing and Speaking: Exploring the Dialogue between Author and Reader in a Pentecostal Hermeneutic," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 28, no. 2 (September 14, 2019): 217.

[163] Ibid.

[164] Moore, "A Pentecostal Approach to Scripture," 11.

[165] Arrington, "Pentecostal Identity and Interpretation of the Bible," 16–17. Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 163.

as the Spirit still *speaks* today.[166] The Spirit's activity is not limited to the individual as it can guide the believing community into new meanings of the text.[167]

While the role of the Spirit as a distinct feature of any Pentecostal hermeneutic is challenging to articulate, all interpretations arising from the Spirit's activity are subject to the scrutiny of Scripture.[168] The Spirit offers guidance and revelation in the interpretive process,[169] in which "Scripture is always given the place of priority".[170] Without diminishing the high view of Scripture, Nel argues that for Pentecostals, "the authority of the Spirit comes before the authority of Scripture".[171] Ellington agrees and offers an order of authority; he reasons, as the Spirit was over the Church and the Spirit was prior to Scripture, the order of authority must be as follows, Spirit, Scripture, church.[172]

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[166] Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 199.

[167] Grey, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture with the Spirit in Community," 135.

[168] Purdy, *A Distinct Twenty-First-Century Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 113.

[169] Grey, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture with the Spirit in Community," 135.

[170] Purdy, *A Distinct Twenty-First-Century Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 114.

[171] Nel, "Attempting to Define a Pentecostal Hermeneutics," 10.

[172] Ellington, "Pentecostalism and the Authority of Scripture," 24. Furthermore, "Without the Spirit there would have been no Word, incarnate or written; without the Word, no church" Ibid. Green reminds us that appeals to biblical authority are rarely about the Bible and are almost always about authority, typically, "with establishing our authority over others, rather than God's authority over us." Chris E. W Green, *Sanctifying Interpretation: Vocation, Holiness, and Scripture*, Second Edition. (Cleveland, Tennessee: CPT Press, 2020), 6.

5.3.6 Scripture

For Pentecostals, the Bible is the inspired word of God.[173] It is the primary witness concerning God, as He has chosen to reveal Himself through the text.[174] Such a high view placed upon the biblical account makes it central for any viable approach to Pentecostal hermeneutics.[175] For Pentecostals, the Bible is authoritative in all matters of faith and conduct. This high view of Scripture also recognises its infallibility, an ever-present view.[176] Arrington notes, "This conviction affirms that the Bible is reliable for faith and practice and that the Bible states exactly the truth that the Holy Spirit wishes to convey."[177] While some may point to the myriad of inconsistencies and the ethical flaws in the text, quite rightly, Green reminds us, "It is not enough… simply to hold a 'high' view of Scripture. The question is not so much what we believe about the nature

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[173] The ACC's statement of beliefs, regarding the Bible, in their official document, *ACC Doctrinal Basis*, reads as follows: We believe that the Bible is the inerrant, inspired and infallible Word of God and our highest authority for faith and practice. "ACC Doctrinal Basis: Statement of Beliefs" (Australian Christian Churches, April 2021), accessed December 6, 2021, http://access.acc.org.au/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=0zddGueb3BA%3d&tabid=1643&mid=6519&language= en-AU.

[174] Arrington, "Pentecostal Identity and Interpretation of the Bible," 14. Furthermore, "In the writing of the Bible there was full cooperation of the human and the divine. To be more precise, God chose to join His words to the words of the prophets and apostles, and the Bible is, therefore, both divine and human. The inspiration of the Bible remains a profound mystery, but it is the voice of God. "All Scripture" is inspired by God (2 Tim. 3:16), though we do not understand exactly how the prophets and apostles heard the Word of their Lord. The Bible is entirely God's Word written by humans." Ibid., 14–15.

[175] Grey, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture with the Spirit in Community," 134; Purdy, *A Distinct Twenty-First-Century Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 104. Green notes that many of the terms employed by Pentecostals to express this high view of Scripture are borrowed from Evangelicals. Green, *Sanctifying Interpretation*, 1. The first of the AOG (USA) Fundamental Truths reads as follows: "The Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are verbally inspired of God and are the revelation of God to man, the infallible, authoritative rule of faith and conduct." See Assemblies of God (USA), "Assemblies of God 16 Fundamental Truths," *Assemblies of God 16 Fundamental Truths*, 2021, accessed December 6, 2021, https://ag.org/Beliefs/Statement-of-Fundamental-Truths#1.

[176] French L. Arrington, "Pentecostal Identity and Interpretation of the Bible," 15. Arrington notes, "While Pentecostals believe in the infallibility of the Bible, they recognize that they have neither the ability nor the responsibility to try to prove this infallibility. Because the Bible is inspired by an infallible God, it is infallible. For Pentecostals, no other additional demonstration of the Bible's infallibility is necessary or needed." Ibid., 16–17.

[177] Arrington, "Pentecostal Identity and Interpretation of the Bible," 16.

of the Scriptures, and not at all whether we read them or not. What matters is how we read."[178] As we have seen in chapter four[179], Pentecostals typically approach the biblical text "as though the recorded events were *real*, that is, literal, historical events. As the biblical account is understood as the "word of God", the historical situation of the text or what lies behind it is not the focus but rather the revelation it contains.[180] Archer notes this as a traditional view of Scripture held by Pentecostals, which fails to recognise the historical distance between themselves and the text.[181] Ellington writes, "For those Pentecostals immersed in a context that holds a positivist view of history, encounters with the Spirit transcend a restricted perspective on historical events, with the result that the sense of distance between the biblical world and that of the reader is reoriented and radically reduced."[182]

Mittelstadt reminds us, "Through the first century of their existence, Pentecostals found their theological and practical identity by way of their reading of Luke-Acts."[183] The focus on this text impacts and influences how the whole of Scripture is read. A sense of immediacy drives an uncritical acceptance of personal testimonies of divine encounters. As previously noted, Pentecostals tend to be disinterested in locating or specifying the author's intended meaning, affirming "that the word of God in Scripture is inaccessible

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[178] Green, *Sanctifying Interpretation*, 129.

[179] See chapter four - 4.2.2 Priority of Testimony.

[180] Purdy, *A Distinct Twenty-First-Century Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 104. Italics added. Purdy remarks, "Should historical criticism establish an alternate reality the Pentecostal will likely dismiss historical criticism and embrace the biblical account." Ibid.

[181] Archer, "Pentecostal Hermeneutics: Retrospect and Prospect," 135.

[182] Ellington, "Scripture: Finding One's Place in God's Story," 64.

[183] Martin William Mittelstadt, *Reading Luke-Acts in the Pentecostal Tradition* (Cleveland, Tennessee: CPT Press, 2010), 1.

apart from the ongoing revelatory activity of the Spirit who inspired that word."[184] For Pentecostals, the revelation in Scripture is fluid and not simply a past event. It is a revelation that is re-encountered in the present.[185] Scripture is where the individual stories of Pentecostals find a place, one shared by the current community of faith and those that have gone before.[186] For Archer, "Pentecostals believe it is in the context of the believing community that Scripture should be interpreted. The Scripture is not subordinate to the community. The Scripture is a precious gift of God's grace *to* the community."[187]

5.3.7 Community

Before exploring the significance of community for Pentecostals, it is worth considering the term. *Community* is often used with the assumption that it conveys a universal meaning, that we intuitively know what it means, and, therefore, that it requires no further explanation.[188] According to Esther McIntosh, "the term can be used in such a wide variety of ways that attempts to produce a single definition seem futile. In addition, our identity is bound up with those communities of which we would claim to be a part."[189] Ferdinand Tönnies finds expression in the term *Gemeinschaft* ('organic'

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[184] Ellington, "Scripture: Finding One's Place in God's Story," 64.

[185] Ibid., 65.

[186] Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 85.

[187] Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 252. Emphasis added.

[188] Esther McIntosh, "Community and Society," in *Community Identity: Dynamics of Religion in Context*, ed. Sebastian C. H. Kim and Pauline Kollontai (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 69.

[189] Ibid., 69.

Community), which is bound together by various bonds of kinship and fellowship.[190] In such a community, individuals develop their identities as a part of the wider, co-existing group.[191] McIntosh notes, "Communities come into existence in order to satisfy a fundamental human need for familiarity and intimacy; hence, communities cannot be artificially created."[192] Furthermore, a community is not a society that is "engineered into existence in order to satisfy contingent needs, applicable only to a selection of people. Consequently, a community is an end-in-itself, whereas a society is a means-to-an-end."[193]

Gadamer views the role of community as essential for the process of understanding. He remarks, "There would be no hermeneutical task if there were no mutual understanding that had been disturbed and that those involved in a conversation must search for and find again together."[194] As noted in the previous chapter, understanding begins with what we inherit (consciously or unconsciously) from immersion or participation within that shared tradition and community into which we are born.[195] Hence, the role of community features in most approaches to Pentecostal hermeneutics. While our identity is subliminally grounded in community, the amalgamated nature of identity is further complicated by "*sharing an identity with others* of a particular group. Indeed, many

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[190] Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society*, ed. José Harris and Margaret Hollis, trans. José Harris and Margaret Hollis (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), xvii. He contrast this with *Gesellschaft* ('mechanical' Society) "where free-standing individuals interacted with each other through self-interest, commercial contracts, a 'spatial' rather than 'historical' sense of mutual awareness". Ibid., xviii.

[191] Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society*, xviii. However, "Society individual identity was ontologically prior to that of the wider group, attachment to which was merely secondary and instrumental." Ibid. For more on community, see general introduction in Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society*.

[192] Esther McIntosh, "Community and Society," in *Community Identity: Dynamics of Religion in Context*, ed. Sebastian C. H. Kim and Pauline Kollontai (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 72.

[193] Ibid.

[194] Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, 25.

[195] Thiselton, *Hermeneutics: An Introduction*, 17.

contemporary political and social issues revolve around conflicting claims of disparate identities involving different groups, since the conception of identity influences, in many different ways, our thoughts and actions."[196]

Identity is often associated with belonging; in many ways, belonging as defining identity stands in a necessary tension with the sense of separation. There can be no "us" if there is no "them".[197] The identity of a Pentecostal "consists not only of being a Christian but also of having become one."[198] The focus is on belonging *to* and identifying *with* something.[199] Religious identity "provides a worldview that allows individuals to make sense of daily life. In doing so, individuals develop a cultural framework and boundaries for right and wrong."[200] Religion typically determines group boundaries, according to sociologist Clifford Geertz; these boundaries define who is "in", as well as who is "out"[201].

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[196] Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*, Kindle. (Penguin Books Ltd, 2015), Loc. 67-76. Italics in original.

[197] See Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*, 3rd ed. (London: Pluto Press, 2010), 23–40; Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Us and Them in Modern Societies: Ethnicity and Nationalism in Mauritius, Trinidad and Beyond* (Oslo, Norway: Scandinavian University Press, 1992).

[198] Anthony D. Buckley and Mary Catherine Kenney, *Negotiating Identity: Rhetoric, Metaphor, and Social Drama in Northern Ireland* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 137. This is based on a study of Pentecostals in Northern Ireland.

[199] Robbins, "Anthropology of Religion," 158.

[200] Johnson and Grim, *The World's Religions in Figures*, 136.

[201] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 384.

Such boundaries are often difficult to detect, as religious identity becomes intertwined with either national or social identity, occasionally both.[202] For many, there can be an implicit belief that the world is simply a group of religions or civilisations; however, this diagnosis often overlooks the many *other* ways in which people view themselves.[203] Amartya Sen contests the idea that people can be uniquely categorised into a "singular and overarching system of partitioning."[204] He believes it produces a "solitarist" approach to human identity, which ultimately misunderstands everybody, as it views individuals as members of only one group or grouping. In reality, one can be a member of many groups and belong to each one simultaneously and without contradiction. Membership in each of these groups is not mutually exclusive. There are infinite possibilities to this list and infinite possible belongings.[205] Many factors and dynamics influence the ones we *identify* with, when, and why. The fundamental consideration is the values we share or wish to share with others.[206] Belonging to these groups affords a person a specific identity, and none can be taken on their own as the only identity.[207] Thomas Eriksen notes, "The degree of belonging in a group depends on what it has to offer, both in terms of resources and in terms of sanctions."[208] Indeed, there is a distinction between what is offered by tightly and loosely integrated groups.[209]

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[202] Johnson and Grim, *The World's Religions in Figures*, 136.

[203] Sen, *Identity and Violence*, Loc. 76.

[204] Ibid.

[205] Ibid., 76–83.

[206] Jeffrey Weeks, "Value of Difference," in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), 88.

[207] Sen, *Identity and Violence*, Loc. 76-84.

[208] Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *What Is Anthropology?*, 2nd edition. (London: Pluto Press, 2017), 161.

[209] Ibid., 161–162.

On the one hand, for tightly integrated groups, such as those immersed within a tradition by virtue of birth, much can be provided to its members, such as a profession, network of contacts, political and social influence, and spiritual fulfilment in the form of religion. The price to break away from such a group is usually high and involves losing the above advantages and associated benefits such as honour, security, and stability.[210] On the other hand, for loosely integrated groups that may only offer something as simple as an annual gathering, the members of the group "must draw on their other networks of commitment and group memberships."[211] The consequences of opting out of loosely integrated groups are not very significant as they have little influence on individual members of the group.[212]

A Pentecostal interpretive community developed through historical tradition and based on an embedded sense of communal belonging would be considered a tightly integrated group. Such Pentecostal groups are responsible for discerning what the text means and how belonging makes understanding possible.[213] Gadamer describes belonging to a tradition as the "element of tradition in our historical-hermeneutical activity."[214]

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[210] Ibid., 161.

[211] Ibid., 162.

[212] Sen remarks, "Given our inescapable plural identities, we have to decide on the relative importance of our different associations and affiliations in any particular context." Sen, *Identity and Violence*, Loc. 84.

[213] Kenneth J. Archer, "Pentecostal Hermeneutics and the Society for Pentecostal Studies Reading and Hearing in One Spirit and One Accord," *Pneuma* 37 (2015): 319. Nel asserts, "The community testifies to the experiences attributed to the Spirit and then engages Scripture to validate or repudiate the experience or issue, necessitating a dynamic balance between individual, Spirit, Scripture, and the faith community." The role of the community is essential in this process of discernment of a normative experience of the Spirit. Marius Nel, *An African Pentecostal Hermeneutics: A Distinctive Contribution to Hermeneutics* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2018), 187.

[214] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 295.

Belonging is associated with shared "enabling prejudices".[215] Ricœur agrees with Gadamer though he shifts the emphasis of the hermeneutical conversation to the self's relationship with others rather than with itself. However, it is to be noted that Ricœur's perspective is limited due to its concentration on individual relationships (self and other) as opposed to any underlying or emergent bond of community that links both.[216] Though human understanding develops personally, where the role of the Pentecostal reader is emphasised as an actor within the larger story of Scripture, individual stories evolve through interaction with a broader community and their shared sense of beliefs.[217] This is consistent with the Gadamerian notion of understanding as predicated upon belonging, upon what is held in common.[218] Within this community, Archer remarks,

> Certain interpretive methods and particular interpretations of Scripture will become more normative for the community than others. Not all interpretations are equally valid; some are simply wrong. The interpretive community will decide which are and are not acceptable based on various factors, one being the soundness of the method, but more important will be the theological acceptability of the interpretation.[219]

According to Grey, the community is and should be the focus of the reading process for Pentecostals. This focus does not take away from the individual as a part of the body of Christ, where their gifts function within the corporate body.[220] While the community is involved in interpretive decision-making, the "role of the community is particular rather

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[215] Ibid.

[216] Taylor and Mootz III, "Introduction," 2–3.

[217] Archer, "Pentecostal Theology as Story: Participating in God's Mission," 42; Grey, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture with Spirit in Community," 136. See 4.2.2.

[218] Taylor and Mootz III, "Introduction," 10.

[219] Archer, "Pentecostal Hermeneutics and the Society for Pentecostal Studies Reading and Hearing in One Spirit and One Accord," 331.

[220] Yong states, "According to the Pauline metaphor, each member's role in the body is absolutely crucial, serving particular functions necessary to the overall health and operation of the body. No member should look down on any other or say that his or her contributions are negligible. This is because each particular member drinks of the same Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13b) and is valued precisely for the distinctive contribution that he or she makes." Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 32.

than universal."[221] The local community is where testimony to the Holy Spirit at work is given and received.[222] For Archer, these testimonies can only be discerned within the community. As such, belonging to the Pentecostal community makes one a Pentecostal interpreter rather than someone who employs a Pentecostal interpretive method. Gadamer remarks, "A person seeking to understand something has a bond to the subject matter that comes into language through the traditionary text and has, or acquires, a connection with the tradition from which the text speaks."[223] Within this community, interpretation actively occurs through discussion and the use of charismatic gifts.[224] The immediate or local community discerns the activity of the Holy Spirit through experience and a reading of Scripture while remaining connected to the broader community, whether domestically or globally.[225] Nel writes,

> What distinguishes Pentecostal Bible reading from other traditions is not a different interpretive method but a distinct narrative which leads to a coherent and cohesive interpretive manner in which the Spirit plays the most important role, and the community of faith and its story forms the influential hermeneutical filter as pre-understanding forming the condition for understanding.[226]

While the shared nature of the Pentecostal community is to be understood as a part of the larger Christian community, it has a distinction compared to Christianity in general due to its narrative tradition.[227] Its diversity and distinctiveness offer an opportunity to

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[221] Grey, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture with Spirit in Community," 137.

[222] Joel B. Green, "Pentecostal Hermeneutics: A Wesleyan Perspective," in *Constructive Pneumatological Hermeneutics in Pentecostal Christianity*, ed. Kenneth J. Archer and L. William Oliverio, Christianity and renewal--interdisciplinary studies (New York, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 165.

[223] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 295.

[224] Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 225.

[225] Grey, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture with Spirit in Community," 137.

[226] Nel, "Attempting to Define a Pentecostal Hermeneutics," 13–14.

[227] Ibid., 14. Nel further remarks, "The Pentecostal community is bound together by a shared Pentecostal experience of the baptism with the Spirit leading to a shared story." Ibid.

develop various interpretive approaches within the movement, many of which recognise the role of a dynamic interpretive community as an essential element within their Pentecostal identity.[228]

5.3.8. Summary

Generally speaking, Pentecostals began to adopt the historical-critical method, more specifically, the variety engaged by Evangelicalism, from the *modern* to the *contemporary period.*[229] In part, the identified benefits of that adoption were outweighed by the disadvantages, particularly in light of original composition and context issues. In an attempt to garner some approval from mainstream Christianity, Pentecostals adopted traditional Evangelical hermeneutic practices. Oliverio remarks, "Instead of rejecting biblical criticism as itself an act of scepticism, these Pentecostal biblical scholars and theologians began utilizing historical-critical methods in biblical interpretation."[230] The emphasis of the Evangelical historical-critical method was to establish the meaning of the text by focusing on the author's intended meaning. Speaking from the North American context, Archer remarks, "This has affected North American Pentecostal community identity—an identity that becomes less Pentecostal and more acceptable to mainstream rationalistic and politically Republican Evangelicalism."[231]

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[228] Grey, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture with Spirit in Community," 138. Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 45.

[229] Oliverio Jr, *Theological Hermeneutics in the Classical Pentecostal Tradition: A Typological Account*, 133.

[230] Ibid.

[231] Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture, and Community*, 201. It is interesting to note that Andrew Evans, the former General Superintendent of the AOG in Australia between, 1977–1997 was the co-founded of the Family First Party in 2001. Denise A. Austin, "Andrew Evans: The Making of an Australian Pentecostal Politician," in *Australian Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements: Arguments from the Margins*, ed. Cristina Rocha, Mark P. Hutchinson, and Kathleen Openshaw (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2020), 148.

For Archer, "It is not enough just to adopt and use academic methods of biblical interpretation stamped with the approval of the Evangelical community in order to prove the legitimacy of [Pentecostal]…interpretations."[232] Whether evangelical or postmodern, the distinctiveness and complexity of Pentecostal interpretations are easily lost or distorted in an effort to align with whatever categories exist within the broader academy.[233] For Pentecostals, the one datum point is the biblical text, understood in particular and relatively unchanging ways. A type of "scriptural fundamentalism" seems to dominate; while Pentecostals have adopted historical-critical methods, they have also maintained a commitment to the reliability of the biblical text as narrative.[234] However, Friesen remarks, "The historical-critical method has not usually looked favourably upon deriving theology and doctrine from narrative portions of Scripture such as Luke-Acts."[235]

Pentecostal interpreters tend to read the text dynamically, the purpose of which is an expectant encounter with God. Of interest is whether that dynamism itself aligns with a reconstituted historical-critical method, where the principle of reflexivity is paramount. Furthermore, we could ask, does it align with a retrieved form of academic engagement with the text informed by the analysis of the hermeneutical method and theory? Essentially, is a commitment to read and interpret dynamically – a function of the

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Austin notes that while "Family First went to great pains to make it clear that it was not a religious party…its policies were clearly based on conservative Christian evangelical foundations." Ibid., 154.

[232] Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century: Spirit Scripture and Community*, 2.

[233] Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 4.

[234] Cargal, "Beyond the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy," 163.

[235] Friesen, *Norming the Abnormal: The Development and Function of the Doctrine of Initial Evidence in Classical Pentecostalism*, 237.

prioritisation of Spirit – analogous to a mode of academic engagement rather than something different? The question is, just how incongruent are Evangelical hermeneutical approaches? Reading the text dynamically disregards the historical distance, emphasising instead the reader's own horizon. This does not mean understanding the historical framework of the text and the author is inconsequential. Pentecostals do and, as Purdy asserts, should employ the historical-grammatical method as it allows for comprehension of the original text. Vital information is gained through this process, such as details about cultural norms, beliefs, practices, and much more. Once this information is known, it can support and validate the application of the biblical text to the contemporary context.[236] However, Purdy states, "Pentecostals come to the interpretive task holding to a specific understanding of historical possibilities. Pentecostals understand historical possibility from a stance that sees God active in history."[237]

Grey, too, recognises the value of the original context of the biblical text. However, she asserts that "limiting a responsible reading approach to the strictures of historical criticism denies the reader's role (and subjectivity) and the possibilities for multiple meanings as highlighted by postmodernism."[238] The point here is the pre-conceptions shared with postmodernity regarding the autonomous nature of the text as well as its multivocality and polysemic character.[239] Notably, the precise nature of the historical-

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[236] Purdy, *A Distinct Twenty-First-Century Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 93.

[237] Ibid.

[238] Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 103–104.

[239] Ibid., 104; Gerald T. Sheppard, "Biblical Interpretation After Gadamer," *Pneuma* 16, no. 1 (1994): 125. While Pentecostals can employ postmodern approaches, there is still apprehension due to the relativistic postmodern worldview. Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 48–49, 104, 131. While there is a respect for a reader-response approach, according to Keener, "most global

critical method has yet to be discussed, mainly its purpose and function. In fact, whether the purpose and function of historical criticism have been perceived in line with its original intentions is a question of some significance. Pentecostals adopted the historical-critical method advocated by Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism wholesale. I believe how Evangelicals perceived the task and purpose needs to be discussed further. Thus, we shall now turn to an examination of the historical-critical method itself.

5.4 Historical-Critical Method

Historical-Criticism is synonymous with what may be termed "mainline" biblical criticism.[240] When applied to the study of the Bible, Historical-Criticism,[241] broadly speaking, is a term given to a group of related approaches that all focus on the *historical* character of the Bible.[242] Historical criticism is a branch of the wider suite of critical approaches to the Bible that focuses on the apocryphal "world behind the text". It is assumed that behind every text, a view of life is presented and conditioned by the author's world.[243] Tate asserts that an author can only imagine and express a world based on their historical,

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Pentecostals and charismatics reject this relativistic and Scripture-relativizing approach of meaning being determined only by the readers' context." Craig S. Keener, *Spirit Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture in Light of Pentecost* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2016), 121.

[240] John J. Collins, "Historical-Critical Methods," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament*, ed. Stephen B. Chapman and Marvin A. Sweeney (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 129. Barton argues that *historical-critical method* is not a well-chosen term simply because criticism is neither historical nor a method. Although he does suggest there is a correlation with history, particularly since the nineteenth century. John Barton, *The Nature of Biblical Criticism*, 1st ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 67–68. He further remarks, "Though criticism certainly entails situating texts in the context of their origin, it does not necessarily involve the reconstruction either of historical events or of the history of the text's development. Ibid., 68.

[241] Also known as the historical-critical method(s) and *historico–critical*.

[242] David R. Law, *Historical Critical Method: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Continuum, 2012), 1.

[243] W. Randolph Tate, *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2014), 15.

cultural, literary, and ideological setting; hence, historical considerations become significant in the hermeneutical process.[244] Similarly, John Collins asserts that to frame any discussion on the composition of the biblical text, such as the time, place, and circumstance, historical reconstruction is necessary.[245] Collins defines historical-critical methods as those recognising that "biblical texts were written long ago, in a cultural matrix very different from our own, and attempt to understand the texts first of all in the context of that ancient setting."[246] According to R. G. Collingwood, while attempts to reconstruct the past are limited "to describing what people and things do, the nature of these people and things remain…outside its field of vision"[247], exegesis considers such things as it attempts to unfold the meaning of texts.[248]

The Bible requires explanation as a collection of ancient documents in an ancient language and from the realm of ancient cultures. That "explanation" is what the historical-critical method proffers.[249] Explaining and understanding any form of communication involves exegesis, and with biblical exegesis in mind, Gene Tucker highlights the fundamental rule "that the interpreter must be obedient to the text itself; that is, he or she must allow the texts to determine their interpretation [by]… listening to and hearing

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[244] Ibid.

[245] Collins, "Historical-Critical Methods," 129.

[246] Ibid.

[247] Robin G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History: With Lectures, 1926 - 1928*, ed. Willem J. van der Dussen, Revised Edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 45.

[248] Edgar Krentz, "Editor's Foreword," in *The Historical-Critical Method*, ed. Gene M. Tucker (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), vi. While there are differences, the two are closely related. According to Gene Tucker, "on the one hand, any ancient text must be analysed and interpreted before it can serve as a source for history, and on the other hand, texts from the past must be interpreted in terms of their historical meaning –what they said in and to their own times." Ibid.

[249] Edgar Krentz, *The Historical-Critical Method*, Guides to Biblical scholarship (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 1.

the text, and not one's own voice."[250] Historical-critical scholarship advances such interpretation in two ways; first, it recognises a distance between the interpreter and the text. Second, it provides a way to bridge the gap by connecting the interpreter and text to a particular history.[251]

However, one of the main pre-conceptions of Historical Criticism is that a considerable amount of what is articulated in the Bible about the earlier periods is written by authors who expressed strong theological and ideological convictions instead of what one might call *true* historical records in the modern sense.[252] Barr reminds us, "The contents of the Bible are in large measure not a true historical source but are a religious ideology expressing itself in a form purporting to be historical narrative."[253] The interpretation of the events the Bible relates will naturally be affected by whether we read them as literal accounts of historical narratives or as literary constructions, causing much debate about what the Bible "says" and how to read it.[254] Historical criticism introduces biblical interpretations and new methods based on a secular understanding of history to address the question of history posed by the Bible.[255]

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[250] Krentz, "Editor's Foreword," v.

[251] Ibid.

[252] James Barr, *History and Ideology in the Old Testament: Biblical Studies at the End of a Millennium* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 18; Israel Finkelstein and Amihai Mazar, "A Short Summary: Bible and Archaeology," in *The Quest for the Historical Israel: Debating Archaeology and the History of Early Israel*, ed. Brian B. Schmidt (Leiden Boston: Brill, 2007), 183.

[253] Barr, *History and Ideology in the Old Testament*, 18.

[254] Of course, the Bible does not say anything, the reader or interpreter does the "saying".

[255] John J. Collins, "The Historical-Critical Methods," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament*, ed. Stephen B. Chapman and Marvin A. Sweeney (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 129.

Within historical criticism, the various criticisms utilised to determine the meaning of the text as intended by the author[256] were expanded into specific methodological orientations or what Fitzmyer describes as "refinements".[257] He remarks, "Though they are not per se historical criticism, they are forms of criticism that in the long run affect the historical judgment about an ancient text."[258] The "refinements" developed during the twentieth century include source criticism, form criticism and redaction criticism.[259] As there are multiple methods used within historical criticism, to speak of the "historical-critical method" in the singular is, of course, a misnomer, a point made explicitly by Barr. [260]

The historical-critical method is often misunderstood or misrepresented in terms of discerning some kind of objective meaning of a text. Thus, it is essential to trace how the historical-critical method is understood from its original specification. According to David Law, "The conventional view is that historical criticism originated as a result of the revolution in human thinking known as the 'Enlightenment' or 'Age of Reason', which began in the seventeenth century."[261] While there are traces of historical criticism in the

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[256] Fitzmyer reminds us that, "Since the truth that he has enshrined in his text is analogous to the form used, historical criticism teaches us that we cannot read an ancient text without the sophistication that the form calls for." Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Interpretation of Scripture: In Defense of the Historical-Critical Method* (New York: Paulist Press, 2008), 66.

[257] Ibid., 64.

[258] Ibid.

[259] Ibid.

[260] Barr, *History and Ideology in the Old Testament*, 32. For the purpose of this study, the singular will be employed to maintain consistency as both the singular and plural is used by those that engage the topic.

[261] Law, *Historical Critical Method*, 25. From the beginning, critical theories questioned the authority of the Old Testament in the Church. Accordingly, the Church had to defend the authority of the biblical text against such critical theories. Although typically in the seventeenth century 'criticism' stood in the service of religion, French priest Richard Simon argued that scripture alone was far too unreliable a basis for Christianity, suggesting a need for an authoritative teaching office within the Church. J.C. O'Neill, "Biblical Criticism," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary: A-C* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 726–727. Simon is viewed by many as the founder of biblical criticism. He published his *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* in 1678 in which he used the term 'critique', "a term previously used only by 'personnes savantes', to describe

early Church[262], its foundations were laid in the Renaissance. The idea of reading the Bible critically, according to Barton,

> is linked with the Reformation insistence on the authority of the Bible, read freely, over the Church. Christian believers, according to Reformation principles, have the right to ask whether the Bible really means what the Church says it means. In that sentence lies the whole development of biblical criticism in a germ.[263]

For Renaissance humanists, the original historical settings of the biblical texts became the focal point of interest, particularly the perceived differences between their time and that of the text.[264] Throughout the early Church, the dominant method of biblical interpretation was allegorical.[265] However, during the Reformation, one can observe the rise of literal exegesis, which undermined the allegorical method and the authoritative interpreters that employed the method. The Reformers viewed the Church as being "under" Scripture. As Scripture had primacy over the Church, the emphasis was to identify the meaning of Scripture in itself, a meaning that was independent of the Church's interpretation. This emphasis resulted in exegesis becoming the central focus of the Reformation churches. With the allegorical method displaced, interpreters concentrated on the literal meaning and the original languages of Scripture. Luther structured the exegetical method around the literal (*sensus literalis*), grammatical (*sensus grammaticus*) and historical (*sensus historicus*) sense of the Bible.[266]

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his reading of the Bible." Reinhart Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1988), 105.

[262] Law, *Historical Critical Method*, 26–32.

[263] Barton, "Historical Critical Approaches," 16.

[264] Brettler, *How to Read the Bible*, 13. "They also recognized the value of using Scripture as a means of criticizing the present state of the church, exposing its corruption, and bringing about reform." Ibid.

[265] Law, *Historical Critical Method*, 26.

[266] Ibid., 35–36. A result of the Renaissance there was intense study of sources of ancient literature as well as ancient language. This motivated a concern for the authenticity of ancient documents. Ibid., 34–35. Law notes that, "[This] weakened the status of the Vulgate as the definitive text of the Bible. If the Church stands under Scripture and is not its definitive and authoritative interpreter, this naturally raises the question of the

Law notes,

> A scriptural passage has one basic meaning, which is to be established not by allegorization but by means of grammatical study and by paying attention to the setting of the passage. The guide for interpretation should be the literal meaning of the text…The task was no longer to pass beyond the literal meaning to an allegedly higher, spiritual meaning…This led to an increasing consciousness of Scripture as the witness to God's acts in history rather than as a compendium of spiritual truths.[267]

As the very foundation of the Church was held to be the authority of the Bible, historical criticism was employed to uphold and strengthen the position of the various churches of the Protestant Reformation. Biblical criticism was also actively employed against heretics and the Roman Catholic Church during this period.[268] Due to the work of several key liberal Protestant intellectuals in Europe, predominantly in Germany and Britain, the Bible came to be regarded much like any other book and was ultimately judged by human reason alone.[269] Customarily, the division of scholarship into pre-critical and critical periods, which provided the tools for this critical enquiry, is associated with the widely recognised intellectual revolutions that occurred in the eighteenth century.[270] According to Rogerson, there was a significant distinction between the two periods. He notes,

> in the pre-critical period, biblical interpretation was subservient to the doctrines of various churches, whereas, during the critical period, scholars have refused to let religious orthodoxy set the limits to the scope of the results of their enquiries…It was in Germany that there emerged from about the 1760s, a body of professional

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legitimate method of interpreting the Bible. How do we identify the true, i.e., literal meaning, of Scripture and how do we avoid imposing our own meaning upon Scripture? It is such concerns that led Luther to consider the problem of exegetical method." Ibid., 36–37.

[267] Law, *Historical Critical Method*, 37.

[268] O'Neill, "Biblical Criticism," 727. According to Brettler et al, "in some circles of the European Enlightenment a remarkable shift of focus took place. There the Bible ceased to be a way of reforming and purifying the church. Instead, undermining biblical authority became a means of undermining the church's authority and even the authority of the state by which the church, whether Protestant or Catholic, was supported." Brettler, Enns, and Harrington, *Bible and the Believer*, 15.

[269] Brettler, Enns, and Harrington, *Bible and the Believer*, 15. "The locus of biblical interpretation moved from the monastery and the pulpit to the scholar's study and eventually to the German university." Ibid.

[270] Philip R. Davies, "Biblical Studies: Fifty Years of a Multi-Discipline," *Currents in Biblical Research* 13, no. 1 (October 2014): 41–42; J. W. Rogerson, "Biblical Criticism," ed. R. J. Coggins and J. L. Houlden, *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (London: SCM Press, 1994), 53–54.

scholarship whose investigations into the Bible were not limited to doctrinal restraints.[271]

Although there was resistance to unrestrained criticism in Germany in the nineteenth century, particularly between 1830-1860, it was not until the 1870s that British[272] and North American biblical scholars began to accept such findings.[273] This sets the context of biblical scholarship and critical activity to a period surrounding the development of early Pentecostalism. The nineteenth century is considered the great age of historiography, characterised by von Ranke's famous dictum that the historian's task is to establish the past "as it really was."[274] As we reflect on the interpretation of the biblical text, considering the historical context may be an obvious step, although this cannot be assumed as the text was not believed to be bound in time due to divine authorship.[275]

There have been several key moments in the development of historical analysis, beginning with the Reformation. It established the importance of the original context of the Bible. Subsequently, with the Enlightenment, the human origins of the Bible also became a focus, and with the Romantic movement, emphasis was placed on the "expressive character of literature".[276] More recently, the development of historical

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[271] Rogerson, "Biblical Criticism," 84. A misunderstanding that may be obscured by the division of pre-critical and critical is that during the pre-critical era "scholars were much more open to certain issues than the orthodox defenders of the Bible in the critical period. For example, Calvin, in his commentary on Genesis, was ready to accept that the account in Gen. 1 was not meant to accord with scientific discoveries. It was, rather, a description of creation such as could be understood by a normal Israelite." Ibid.

[272] This dates indicates when Britain as a group began to accept biblical scholarship, prior to this there was no formal body of critical scholarship, although deists did pave the way in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries with their attacks on the OT. Rogerson, "Biblical Criticism," 84.

[273] Ibid.

[274] Barton, "Historical Critical Approaches," 12; Collins, "The Historical-Critical Methods," 130.

[275] Collins, "The Historical-Critical Methods," 129.

[276] Ibid., 130.

criticism in the twentieth century took two distinct paths. Based primarily on a German tradition, the first consisted of methods of literary analysis. The second was a North American tradition influenced by W. F. Albright, which allied itself to archaeological quests to recover the ancient Near Eastern background of the text. While both approaches have benefits, neither can adequately offer historical-critical analysis unaided.[277]

5.4.1 A Critique of the Historical-Critical Method

The North American Tradition, though fruitful, has its detractors. It has been criticised for focusing its interests on concerns "behind the text" rather than the text itself. With little regard for literary form and genre, the biblical text has been too readily accepted at face value.[278] Barton states that many writings employing the approach developed by Albright are "insufficiently critical".[279] For Collins, "the Albrightian approach needs to be supplemented by a concern for the text in its final form and by sensitivity to its literary character."[280] By contrast, the German tradition places increased focus on the division of texts and the composition of many biblical books over time. Undoubtedly, the interpreter needs to engage these facts as attempts to distinguish between layers in a text is a valuable pursuit.[281] However, critics have pointed out that the distinction between sources and the various layers within the text is not an end in itself. For critics, the fragmentation of the

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[277] Ibid., 130–133.

[278] Ibid., 132–133. Collins points to the work of John Bright by way of example as a tendency of face value reading of the biblical text. Ibid., 133.– see John Bright, *A History of Israel.* (London: SCM Press, 1991).

[279] Barton, *The Nature of Biblical Criticism*, 25.

[280] Collins, "The Historical-Critical Methods," 133.

[281] Ibid., 132.

biblical text into smaller sources undermines the integrity and function of Scripture.[282] The

fragmentation is accompanied by a hierarchy of authenticity of the textual layers identified

by the method, which places greater value on earlier layers in the text.[283] Gerhard Maier

points out that the challenge of making such judgements about the text, essentially

degrading theological statements to lower levels of canonical authority, introduces

uncertainty.[284] The broader issue around the historical-critical method's proclivity toward

fragmentation or atomization of the text is the lack of focused attention on texts as a

whole.[285] Brevard Child describes disregarding the canonical shape as the "corrosive effects

of historical criticism"[286]. Law remarks, "The historical-critical method, then, fragments the

Bible but has not found adequate ways of reconstructing the Bible in a way that enables it

to speak to communities of faith and individual believers."[287]

Law offers fragmentation as the first reason for claiming that the historical-critical method

is obsolete. Second, he notes the loss of the theological meaning of the Bible as a result of

the historical-critical method's emphasis on non-theological issues. Focusing on the

"historical" meaning at the cost of the theological meaning results in a secular understanding

of the biblical text.[288] While the non-theological focus gathers worthwhile material,

according to Childs, "in spite of a plethora of new information, the true theological witness

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[282] Law, *Historical Critical Method*, 217; Collins, "The Historical-Critical Methods," 132.

[283] Law, *Historical Critical Method*, 217.

[284] Gerhard Maier, *The End of the Historical-Critical Method* (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1977), 16–17.

[285] Jeannine K. Brown, *Scripture as Communication* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007), 216–217.

[286] Brevard S. Childs, "Toward Recovering Theological Exegesis," *Pro Ecclesia: A Journal of Catholic and Evangelical Theology* 6, no. 1 (February 1997): 18.

[287] Law, *Historical Critical Method*, 218.

[288] Ibid., 218–220.

of the text is rendered mute."[289] Third, the historical-critical method undermines *Christian praxis.* As historical inquiry is employed to establish the "truth" of the Bible, faith somehow relies on this. While historical certitude is ever elusive, and newer discoveries or methods can undermine previous results, what remains via historical investigation is an approximation of the truth. Essentially the result and problem of historical investigation, according to Law,

> is that the decision of faith is postponed indefinitely. It is not possible ever to secure an adequate historical foundation for faith, because there always exists the possibility of discovering new historical data which might throw previous conclusions concerning the reliability of Christianity's historical foundations into doubt.[290]

The fourth and final reason presented by Law as a reason for claiming that historical criticism is in terminal decline relates to its ideological bias. This contention rests on the lack of objectivity in analysing the biblical text. The historical-critical method's complete thraldom to the "Enlightenment project" is characterised by several principled biases, including rationalism, positivism, historicism, objectivity, and commitment to the stability of textual meaning, all of which represent a secular worldview in terms of possibilities of and for interpretation.[291]

Law highlights what he believes to be a presupposition of the historical-critical method: a single, definitive, objective meaning of a text usually identified with the author's intent. The

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[289] Brevard S. Childs, *The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction* (London: SCM Press, 1984), 51. Michael Legaspi remarks that the historical-critical study of the Bible has produced "an astonishing amount of useful information. It has become clear, though, that academic criticism in its contemporary form cannot offer a coherent, intellectually compelling account of what this information is actually *for.*" Michael C. Legaspi, *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), 169.

[290] Law, *Historical Critical Method*, 221.

[291] Ibid., 223–224.

idea of an unambiguous objective meaning has been widely contested for several reasons. The first dispute relates to denying levels or multiple possible meanings in the text.[292] The second relates to competing interpretations of texts. Schüssler Fiorenza contends that historical sources should not be understood as evidence but as perspectives, which allude to something other than one single authoritative, objective meaning of the text.[293] As an interpreter reads a text, they fill in the gaps in the act of reading. Hence, texts are fluid, and textual meaning results from an interaction between the reader and the text. One cannot assume a rigid meaning based on the methods and insights of historical criticism, as this would negate the multiple layers of meaning found in the text and ultimately silence the multiplicity of voices.[294]

The historical-critical method has also been charged with failing to recognise and reflect on its own biases. It has become an instrument that supports particular interests, predominantly informed by western, white, male, middle-class scholars, echoing the concerns made by Fee earlier in the chapter.[295] According to Law,

> The result of historical criticism's blindness to its ideological agenda has been the creation of a new slavery. Although the historical-critical method originally came into existence as a liberating force which enabled human beings to break free from the control of the Church and ecclesial dogma, it has now metamorphosed into a new form of oppression.[296]

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[292] Ibid., 227.

[293] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Biblical Interpretation and Critical Commitment," *Studia Theologica - Nordic Journal of Theology* 43, no. 1 (January 1989): 11; Law, *Historical Critical Method*, 227.

[294] Law, *Historical Critical Method*, 228.

[295] Ibid., 229–230. See chapter 5, section 5.2.2.

[296] Ibid., 229.

5.4.2 A Defence of the Historical-Critical Method

While it is recognised that historical criticism divides the texts into smaller units, the process need not necessarily result in fragmentation and atomization of the text. The purpose of historical criticism is not to produce the "corrosive effects" mentioned by Childs, but rather to advance; the study of the sources so as to protect the unity and coherence of the text despite the various inconsistencies and tensions found within it.[297] Barton agrees and writes, "it is only because the critics approached the text with an expectation it would be such a whole that they were struck by the features that often mean it cannot be so. They did not set out to find "aporias"; they noticed them just because they were trying to read the text as coherent."[298] Barton also notes that the historical-critical approach begins with the opposite of atomizing tendencies in an effort to reconcile difficulties.[299] In terms of the issues of fragmentation and atomization, Law asserts that critics of the historical-critical method should focus on the *synthesis* of the method rather than the *analysis*.[300]

One must also consider the method itself in response to the charge of any loss of theological meaning. According to Law, the method must be based on a hermeneutic appropriate to the study of the biblical text. There is a need to critique the ideologies of

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[297] Ibid., 230.

[298] Barton, *The Nature of Biblical Criticism*, 20 n.20.

[299] Ibid., 24.

[300] Law, *Historical Critical Method*, 231.

interpreters and consider whether they are appropriate to the type of texts within and that comprise the Bible.[301] Law asserts,

> the social location of the interpreter cannot and should not be excluded from the act of interpretation, we can at least be aware of how it influences our application of the tools of the historical-critical method and the way we read the text. This means that there will be a dialectical tension between the historical–critical method, the biblical text, and the ideology of the interpreter. Ideally, the way this tension is resolved, and its three elements are synthesized will allow theological meanings to emerge that are both fair to the text and yet speak to the present.[302]

To deal with an issue related to the loss of theological meaning, that of undermining praxis, Barton appeals to the stages of interpreting or understanding a text in the work of Ernesti and Schleiermacher.[303] The three stages are understanding, explanation and application. For biblical studies, the first two terms relate to exegesis and the third to interpretation. However, confusion arises when "theological interpretation" of the Bible means several things. Barton notes, first, that the exegesis relates to theological content.[304] Second, following exegesis, "the interpreter then goes on to ask about the text's theological truth or falsehood, or to show how the text can be theologically productive."[305] Third, "the exegesis itself is controlled by a theological or religious vision, so that the meaning found in the text in the course of exegesis is determined by prior theological

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[301] Indeed, this is already a value judgement and, a pre-conception vis-à-vis the Bible's sacred character and quality.

[302] Law, *Historical Critical Method*, 233.

[303] Barton, *The Nature of Biblical Criticism*, 176. The three stages are the *subtilitas intelligendi*, the *subtilitas explicandi*, and the *subtilitas applicandi*. Ibid. Gadamer argues for a unified process and states, "we are forced to go one step beyond romantic hermeneutics, as it were, by regarding not only understanding and interpretation, but also application [*Anwendung*] as comprising one unified process" Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 308.

[304] Barton, *The Nature of Biblical Criticism*, 176.

[305] Ibid., 177.

commitments."[306] For Barton, the conflation of the act of understanding and evaluating or applying a text is problematic. However, the historical-critical method is only a danger to praxis if it is identified with the application rather than understanding and explanation.[307] As Law remarks, "It is the means by which we ensure that it is indeed the biblical text itself that we are applying and not merely a conception of what we would like the text to say."[308]

Finally, to address the accusation that the historical-critical method is ideologically biased, one must remember that while historical criticism may have been placed in the service of various ideologies, it is a method rather than an ideology. In short, there needs to be attentiveness to the presuppositions of those applying the method so as to isolate their motives. The accusation above does not undermine the historical-critical method itself but instead stresses the need to augment the method; an augmentation that evaluates the presupposition and ideology of its practitioners.[309]

While considering whether the days of historical criticism are numbered, David Clines recommends that those well-versed in the historical-critical method should not give up their day job.[310] However, he argues, "The problem with historical criticism of the Bible is that its results are not assured"[311], and as such is not able to deliver on what it

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[306] Ibid.

[307] Ibid.; Law, *Historical Critical Method*, 235.

[308] Law, *Historical Critical Method*, 235.

[309] Ibid., 235–236.

[310] David J.A. Clines, "Historical Criticism: Are Its Days Numbered?," in *Exegetical Day* (Presented at the Finnish Exegetical Society, Helsinki, 2007), 20.

[311] Ibid., 7.

promises.[312] Whether the historical-critical method is still *de rigueur*, it is worth considering what it promises through an assessment of its basic principles as enumerated in the work of the German liberal thinker Ernst Troeltsch.[313]

5.4.3 Troeltschian Principles of Historical Criticism

Troeltsch's essay "On Historical and Dogmatic Method in Theology" (1898) asserts that at least three principles guide historical criticism. Van Harvey offers a summary that is worth quoting at length:

> (1) the principle of criticism, by which he [Troeltsch] meant that our judgments about the past cannot simply be classified as true or false but must be seen as claiming only a greater or a lesser degree of probability and as always open to revision; (2) the principle of analogy, by which he meant that we are able to make such judgments of probability only if we presuppose that our present experience is not radically dissimilar to the experience of past persons; and (3) the principle of correlation, by which he meant that the phenomena of man's historical life are so related and interdependent that no radical change can take place at any one point in the historical nexus without effecting a change in all that immediately surrounds it. Historical explanation, therefore, necessarily takes the form of understanding an event in terms of its antecedents and consequences, and no event can be isolated from its historically conditioned time and space.[314]

Harvey proposes a fourth principle, that of autonomy. The unencumbered right to think for oneself.[315] The most fundamental of these principles, according to Collins, is the Troeltschian principle of criticism which maintains that; results are never certain or

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[312] Ibid.

[313] For a discussion on Troeltschian and non-Troeltschian versions of historical criticism, see Alvin Plantinga, "Two (or More) Kinds Of Scripture Scholarship," *Modern Theology* 14, no. 2 (April 1998): 243–278.

[314] Van Austin Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer: The Morality of Historical Knowledge and Christian Belief* (London: SCM Press, 1966), 14–15.

[315] Ibid., 39.

final. In theory, historical criticism does not promise objectivity or "absolute truth".[316] This is consistent with the belief that Troeltsch was typically regarded as too "relativistic" in his day.[317] Barr remarks, "biblical studies, even in the most 'critical' days, tended to look for, and depend on, the 'absolutes… [something Troeltsch] declared to be unavailable."[318]

While it is generally believed that by employing the historical-critical method, one can objectively establish the meaning of a text, at no point do either Troeltsch or Harvey allude to objectivity as a principle of historical criticism.[319] While the author's intended meaning must be reconstructed cautiously, the meaning found within the texts is situational, and thus the texts can take on new meanings.[320] Collins notes, "Contrary to what is often alleged, historical criticism does not necessarily or always reduce a text to a single meaning. But historical critics usually assume a hierarchy of meanings and often regard the original historical context as basic or primary."[321] The historian can recover this basic or primary "evidence" and verify it. However, according to Edgar Krentz, all knowledge is historically conditioned; therefore, the "historical coefficient" must be considered.[322] This emphasises Troeltsch's principle of criticism allowing for

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[316] Collins, "Historical-Critical Methods," 136.

[317] Barr, *History and Ideology in the Old Testament*, 175–176.

[318] Ibid.

[319] Collins, "Historical-Critical Methods," 136.

[320] Ibid.

[321] Ibid.

[322] Edgar Krentz, *The Historical-Critical Method* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 56.

verification or challenge through reflection, confirming that historical research only produces probabilities, not certainties.[323]

5.5 Summary

Early Pentecostals' suspicion towards education and critical reflection of the Bible led to truth claims being asserted with little or no critical examination. This somewhat naïve approach which assumed meaning to be self-evident was replaced by a more rationalist approach adopted from Evangelicals.[324] I agree with Archer's comment that Pentecostalism became "less Pentecostal" after adopting this approach. While much could be said about the Historical-Critical Method (and indeed much has been), what is specifically relevant to Pentecostalism and this thesis is that Pentecostals have adopted it on account of an association with Evangelicalism. As the preferred approach to biblical interpretation for Evangelicals, the Historical-Critical Method was primarily adopted by Pentecostals in the Modern period; however, more recently, there has been something of a departure from this approach by numerous Pentecostal scholars. While many have willingly inherited the Evangelical version of the Historical-Critical Method, it seems that its acceptance has hindered the development of a Pentecostal hermeneutic. A further point raised as a result of the assessment of the Historical-Critical Method concerns how Pentecostals understand the historical-critical method and, more importantly, how distant that understanding is from the original specification of the method itself.

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[323] Ibid., 56–57.

[324] Scott A. Ellington, "History, Story, and Testimony: Locating Truth in a Pentecostal Hermeneutic," *Pneuma* 23, no. 1 (2001): 246–247.

As Pentecostal scholarship seeks to advance into its own right, it is imperative that ongoing conversations regarding a distinct Pentecostal hermeneutic occur. I suggest it prudent for Pentecostals to re-evaluate the possibility of the pre-dominant methods in their hermeneutic arsenal with their values as a community. According to Grey, "The recent aim of Pentecostal scholarship has been to reflect on and contribute to the distinct features of its community to the ecumenical dialogue."[325] As a result, Pentecostal scholarship has attempted to define a distinct theology, leading to an upsurge in interest concerning various topics, including the general development of Pentecostal hermeneutics along with Pentecostal hermeneutics in ecumenical dialogue. [326] The surge in discussion relating to hermeneutics is partly in response to various Christian traditions wanting dialogue concerning distinct contemporary hermeneutical practices.[327] Most would agree that the ongoing conversation regarding a distinctively Pentecostal hermeneutic is needed if Pentecostals want to be understood as having something relevant to offer the broader Christian community.[328] With this in mind, it is of value to explore a Christian tradition that differs from the Evangelical and is perhaps considered completely "other" to Pentecostalism, the Catholic tradition, and examine how it has wrestled with similar hermeneutical issues.

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[325] Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 36.

[326] Ibid.

[327] Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century: Spirit Scripture and Community*, 1.

[328] Kenneth J. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century: Spirit Scripture and Community* (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 2.

Chapter Six: Frames and Frameworks

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will explore the Catholic tradition's approach to hermeneutical issues relating to the interpretation of the Bible. More importantly, how and in what ways have those issues been identified and addressed, and are they enlightening for the Pentecostal tradition? The chapter will offer a counterpoint for Pentecostal reflection and consider the papal teachings on the Bible and its interpretation from the close of the nineteenth century to the present day, a period that overlaps with the emergence and development of the Pentecostal movement. It will focus on specific documents that emerged during, or in the wake of, the major conciliar gathering of recent times, the Second Vatican Council, *Dei Verbum,* and the *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*. In contemplating whether the questions addressed by the Pontifical Bible Commission (PBC) might be a helpful dialogue partner, I am not suggesting that Pentecostals adopt the Catholic approach. Equally, I am not proposing a "framework" within which interpretation can be controlled, as that would be counter-intuitive. On the contrary, the exploration of the Catholic approach simply provides insight into how the hermeneutical question has been framed and what insights can be gleaned for the Pentecostal movement.

6.2 Antecedents to the Second Vatican Council

In the two hundred years leading up to the late nineteenth century, and due to its largely rationalist tendencies, Catholic scholarship purposefully avoided any engagement with formal critical methods, unlike early Pentecostalism. The post-Enlightenment period heralded a distrust of authority and tradition in all matters of critical inquiry. The belief was that "truth could be attained only through reason, observation, and experiment. That quest for the dominance of reason in the pursuit of truth and human welfare sought to free humanity of what it considered persecution by religious authority."[1] These rationalistic tendencies conflicted with Church authority, leading some to espouse atheism, deism, and the eventual rejection of divine revelation and God's intervention in human history. The rationalistic attitudes led many to view the Bible as simply another fallible source about the past.[2] These were grave concerns for the Catholic Church and developing Pentecostalism alike.

However, that period from the late nineteenth century to the present day is marked by three significant developments for critical biblical studies. It begins with the inauguration of Catholic critical scholarship and the reversal of the church's reluctance to sanction the use of scientific methods.[3] Major documents on biblical interpretation represent each of the three developments or periods. Joseph Prior offers a summary:

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[1] Fitzmyer, "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church Today," 85.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Joseph G. Prior, *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis*, 50 (Rome: Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 2001), 89.

The first period is marked by an initial opening to critical biblical studies in the encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* (1893) and the full acceptance of critical methodology in *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943). The second period is primarily represented by the conciliar constitution *Dei Verbum* (1965). The third period is represented by the PBC *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (1993).[4]

What follows will be a brief overview of each of these documents.

6.2.1 *Providentissimus Deus*

The encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, *Providentissimus Deus*, "On the Study of Scripture", issued in November 1893, was designed to deal with the effects of the Enlightenment on the critical interpretation of ancient documents, including the Bible. While this uncompromising new approach ultimately rejected dogma, revelation, and all things supernatural, Pope Leo recognised the profound effect of the various discoveries of the nineteenth century on the interpretation of the Bible. Significant, historical, archaeological, and scientific discoveries made it difficult to interpret the Bible allegorically, as was the trend,[5] a practice not unlike that of early Pentecostals or the Patristic Fathers. Fitzmyer provides examples of such discoveries. He notes, "the decipherment of the Rosetta Stone, which revealed the treasures of the literature of the Egyptians, neighbours of ancient Israel to the west, and that of the Bisitun Stone, which revealed the literature of the Assyrians and Babylonians, neighbours of Israel to the east."[6]

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[4] Ibid. Prior notes that while chronology is used to trace the development of the various responses the critical method from the Catholic position. He states that, "The doctrinal weight of these documents vary [sic]. Dei Verbum carries the most weight followed by the papal encyclicals. The PBC decisions carry the least weight." Ibid., 89 n.1.

[5] Fitzmyer, *The Interpretation of Scripture: In Defense of the Historical-Critical Method*, 4.

[6] Ibid. The Rosetta Stone, inscribed in 196 B.C.E. was discovered in the Nile Delta in 1798. While part of the text was easily read and other parts deciphered by 1821-22, the decipherment of the Egyptian hieroglyphs was not completed until 1866 through the work of German scholar Karl Richard. Finally, it was possible for the

These discoveries, along with countless others, meant that it was now possible to read the Biblical writings of the OT firmly within the ancient, social, cultural, political, and religious setting in which they had been written. Such discoveries made it all too apparent that the biblical text did not appear in a vacuous state. It also became clear that any profound or fundamental interpretation of the biblical text necessitated serious consideration of corresponding literary forms such as those found in recently discovered Egyptian and Assyrian/Babylonian literature.[7]

The combination of rationalism and archaeological and historical discoveries demanded a rethink within the Church, and a formal response was required. Pope Leo sensed the need to provide instruction to Catholics who would be reading their Bible.[8] His response came in *Providentissimus Deus,* which provided the first formal authorisation of the use of critical methods.[9] He responded to critical exegesis and offered a polemic against rationalism[10] and

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first time to read the literature of Israel's neighbours to the west, the ancient Egyptians. Ibid., 79. Fitzmyer notes that, "one was able to compare biblical texts with parallel literary genres. The historical, hymnic, ritual, mythical, and sapiential writings of ancient Egypt thus provided important parallels and counterparts for many similar OT passages." Ibid. Similarly the Bisitun (or Behistun) Stone found on the caravan road between modern day Iran and Iraq. It bears a multilingual inscription. A significant decipherment in 1839 unlocked mysteries of the Assyrian and Babylonian literatures. Again, for the first time various texts including Israel's law codes and historical writing could be studied with comparative literature of Israel's neighbours to the east. Alongside these two very significant stones, thousands of Greek papyri were also found in Egypt which influenced biblical interpretation. Ibid., 79–80.

[7] Fitzmyer, *The Interpretation of Scripture: In Defense of the Historical-Critical Method*, 4.

[8] Fitzmyer, "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church Today," 85–86.

[9] Prior, *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis*, 90.

[10] He Stated "Now, we have to meet the Rationalists, true children and inheritors of the older heretics, who, trusting in their turn to their own way of thinking, have rejected even the scraps and remnants of Christian belief which had been handed down to them. They deny that there is any such thing as revelation or inspiration, or Holy Scripture at all; they see, instead, only the forgeries and the falsehoods of men; they set down the Scripture narratives as stupid fables and lying stories." Pope Leo XIII, "Providentissimus Deus: Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on the Study of the Holy Scriptures," 10.

a defence of the divine character of Scripture.[11] *Providentissimus Deus* highlights the development of reading practices that emphasise the text's true author, the Spirit. The document focuses on discerning the significance of the text in line with the will of the Spirit.[12] We see the similarity here with developing Pentecostalism and recognise that Catholic thinking was not necessarily "other" regarding the focus on the Spirit's role in the interpretive process. Lewis Ayres and Stephen Fowl assert, "Such readings discern that which may have been unknown to the human authors of the text."[13]

Nearly a decade after the issue of *Providentissimus Deus*, in October 1902, Pope Leo set up the PBC, which he intended to present as a body designed to promote biblical studies, but which in practice functioned to provide a safeguard for the status of Scripture against exaggerated, unwarranted criticism.[14] Due to the vigilance of the Commission, for most of the first half of the nineteenth century, Fitzmyer writes, "Catholic scholars were afraid to interpret the Bible; or, if they engaged in any scholarly work on it, they practically limited that work to textual criticism, the so-called Lower Criticism of the Bible."[15] The dark cloud of fear that the Commission exerted over Catholic scholarship continued until World War II, when another encyclical was issued, *Divino Afflante Spiritu.*

There is a developing or emerging trend that, in many ways, can be mapped against Pentecostalism. Scripture was seen in a very specific and inherited way within the Catholic

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[11] Prior, *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis*, 94.

[12] Lewis Ayres and Stephen E. Fowl, "(Mis)Reading the Face of God: The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church," *Theological Studies* 60, no. 3 (September 1999): 514 n.6.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Fitzmyer, "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church Today," 87.

[15] Ibid.

tradition. Its interpretation was thus fixed within and by that tradition as successive generations received it. The publication of early or initial Papal documents relating to the interpretation and, indeed, the status of Scripture sought to zealously protect that status and associated modes of interpretation which were themselves designed to protect that status. These Papal documents were painfully aware of developments in the discipline of Biblical Studies (developments drawn from other disciplines) but, rather than offering any critical engagement with them, chose instead to critique, limit, and ultimately deny them.

6.2.2 *Divino Afflante Spiritu*

Divino Afflante Spiritu, the 1943 encyclical of Pope Pius XII, was published on the 50th jubilee of the publication of *Providentissimus Deus*. It is the clear and acknowledged antecedent of the Second Vatican Council in the area of biblical studies. Indeed, The Second Vatican Council event would not have occurred without it.[16] Donald Senior describes the encyclical as "a watershed reversing several decades of suspicion about modern Catholic biblical scholarship…the "Magna Carta" for Catholic interpretation of Scripture."[17] Pius XII gives reasons for re-evaluating critical Bible study methods in the document. He points to new discoveries as a result of archaeological excavations, the availability of better manuscripts for textual studies, and the improved knowledge of ancient cultures, literature, and languages.[18] The document lays down guidelines for

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[16] Fitzmyer, *The Interpretation of Scripture: In Defense of the Historical-Critical Method*, 3.

[17] Donald Senior, "Interpreting the Scripture: The Church and the Modern Catholic Biblical Renewal," in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Donald Senior et al., ebook. (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021), ebook, accessed January 26, 2022, https://www.theologyandreligiononline.com/encyclopedia?docid=b-9781350182875.

[18] Catholic Church, *The Bible Documents: A Parish Resource.*, ed. David Lysik (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2001), 5.

interpreting Scripture that recognise the validity of the historical-critical method in the task of exegesis. In the document, Pius recommended that Scripture be studied in the original ancient languages. He endorsed textual, linguistic, historical, and literary exegetical methods.[19] Senior notes that Pius was aware of the possible reactions to his endorsements and urged Catholics to be open to new approaches and not to criticise biblical scholars.[20]

The effects of the encyclical were not realised for almost a decade, as concerns about World War II took precedence over matters relating to the interpretation of the Bible.[21] According to Fitzmyer,

> the encyclical made a major break from the often allegorical or fundamentalistic interpretation of Scripture that had been in vogue in Catholic interpretation from at least medieval times. Although Pius XII never used the term "historical-critical method" in his encyclical, that term accurately describes what he was advocating.[22]

While Pius never names the method specifically, he advocates for its use to determine the literal sense of a biblical text. The ultimate aim of the encyclical was to provide guidance

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[19] Mary Healy, "Biblical Interpretation since Divino Afflante Spiritu," in *The Oxford Handbook of Catholic Theology*, ed. Lewis Ayres and Medi Ann Volpe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 767.

According to Rush, "Despite a tentative openness to historical-critical methods in his 1943 *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, Pius XII's 1950 encyclical *Humani Generis* nevertheless perpetuated the climate of suspicion

regarding use of historical methods by scholars following the line of the so-called *nouvelle*

théologie." Ormond Rush, *The Vision of Vatican II: Its Fundamental Principles* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2019), ebook. See Joseph A. Komonchak, "Humani Generis and Nouvelle Théologie," in *Ressourcement*, ed. Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. Murray (Oxford University Press, 2011), 138–156.

[20] Senior, "Interpreting the Scripture: The Church and the Modern Catholic Biblical Renewal," ebook.

[21] Fitzmyer, *The Interpretation of Scripture: In Defense of the Historical-Critical Method*, 3.

[22] Ibid., 102.

concerning the relationship between the critical method and the spiritual interpretation of the Bible. The guidance offered in the document is divided into individual parts.[23]

The first part of the encyclical focuses on the history of biblical studies in the church. The second part builds on the recommendations of Leo XIII, which refer to archaeological and historical discoveries. While Pius insisted on interpreting the Bible in a literal sense, this does not mean interpreters were committed to fundamentalistic literalism[24] but instead to "the real, religious meaning of the written Word of God [that] had to be ascertained."[25] While Leo XIII recommended allegory, Pius XII did not directly mention it. However, he does speak of a "figurative sense" and notes that "It may indeed be useful, especially in preaching, to illustrate, and present the matters of faith and morals by a broader use of the Sacred Text in the figurative sense, provided this be done with moderation and restraint."[26]

Divino Afflante Spiritu inspired a generation of Catholic priests and religious men to engage with biblical studies. Again, as mentioned in the previous chapter, we see similarities here with the *modern period* of Pentecostalism, where Pentecostals entered the academy and began to employ the "proper exegetical method", considered academically sound; these

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[23] Daniel Slivka, "Pontifical Encyclical Divino Afflante Spiritu (1943) and Principle of Interpretation Bible," *E-Theologos. Theological review of Greek Catholic Theological Faculty* 1, no. 1 (April 1, 2010): 107. David Slivka lists the divisions as follows: 1. Study of biblical languages 2. The importance of the critics of the text 3. Decree of Trent about usage of Vulgate and modern interpretation (translation) 4. Meaning of the words and its research 5. Correct usage of spiritual meaning 6. Characteristic features of the inspired authors 7. Importance of the literary genres, mostly in the description of historical events 8. Encouragement of scientific work of various disciplines of ancient sciences. Ibid.

[24] Fitzmyer, *The Interpretation of Scripture: In Defense of the Historical-Critical Method*, 5.

[25] Ibid. Pope Puis XII, "Divino Afflante Spiritu: On Promoting Biblical Studies," 1943, accessed January 18, 2022, https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_30091943_divino-afflante-spiritu.html.

[26] Pope Pius XII, "Divino Afflante Spiritu: On Promoting Biblical Studies,".

were essentially objective and scientific methods. For the Catholics, over time, many study days and workshops devoted to Scripture were started for the laity and clergy. The fast-growing "biblical movement" explained the strong biblical tone heading into Vatican II.[27]

In *Providentissimus Deus*, Leo emphasised the role of divine authorship in the composition of the Scriptures as a response to the rationalistic assaults. In *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, while Pius affirmed the position of previous documents regarding divine inspiration and inerrancy, his attention was also focused on the question of authorship. Although he emphasised the role of human authorship, he affirmed both divine and human authorship.[28] Prior notes, "As Leo defended the divine character of the Scriptures from assault by the rationalists, Pius defended the human character from attacks by fundamentalists."[29]

In summary, *Divino Afflante Spiritu* ended the defensive and perhaps reactionary rear-guard activity of the Biblical Commission.[30] It advocated for a method of interpretation analogous to that employed by Protestant commentators, namely the historical-critical method. Protestant observers gradually noted that "Catholics were now interpreting the Bible as they had been doing since the time of the Renaissance and the Reformation"[31] , a change also noted at the Second Vatican Council.

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[27] Senior, "Interpreting the Scripture: The Church and the Modern Catholic Biblical Renewal," ebook.

[28] Prior, *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis*, 118.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Fitzmyer, "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church Today," 88.

[31] Ibid.

The seeming affinity with Protestants and Protestant biblical scholarship vis-à-vis an adoption of the historical-critical method mirrors the Pentecostal attachment to Evangelicalism, even in the ecumenical aspiration. It shows that developments in "the Catholic world" were not too dissimilar to those in the pentecostal variant, and it speaks to the more comprehensive or global issues that were dominant at this time.[32] Within the broader socio-cultural and political zeitgeist, this ecumenical impulse may reflect a desire to transcend the divisions inflicted upon Christianity by World War II.[33]

When we get to the 1960s and beyond, the reality of biblical studies and its potential benefit rather than a threat to Catholics' reading practices and associated modes of interpretation was fully appreciated. Openness of this type – what was captured within the Second Vatican Council in the term "Signs of the Times" was itself the trend that the Church had to acknowledge and accept. Of course, many deny or cannot accept the principle of engaging with the world. For them, the rear-guard action is the only way to engage.

6.3 The Second Vatican Council

In 1959, Pope John XXIII announced plans for a new ecumenical council a mere three months after being elected Pope. He believed the council was needed as an impetus towards spiritual renewal, a "new Pentecost". The church needed *aggiornamento*

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[32] Fitzmyer, *The Interpretation of Scripture: In Defense of the Historical-Critical Method*, 6. Also See chapter 5, section 5.3.2. The *Modern Period*, ecumenism.

[33] Dianne Kirby, "William Temple, Pius XII, Ecumenism, Natural Law, and the Post-War Peace.," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 36, no. 3/4 (1999): 318.

("updating"). While previous councils were called to deal with threats to the church, such as heresies or schisms, the Second Vatican Council[34] was thus different. [35] It was called to offer a constructive and positive response to the challenges of the modern world. While its clear purpose was thus to revisit and revise aspects of the church and its teachings that better reflected a connection with and a relevance for the contemporary world, it was equally driven by a spirit of reconciliation that desired connection, even communion with other Christians and their communities.[36]

Between 1962 and 1965, the Second Vatican Council of the Catholic Church met in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome for approximately two months each year. Over three thousand bishops from 116 countries participated. A staggering 2,212 speeches were delivered.[37] The council's work was primarily related to drafting, debating, amending, and approving texts. While draft documents were intended for discussion at the council, most were rejected or substantially revised. The result was the production of just sixteen documents[38] that were to reflect a vision of how the church was to meet the challenges of the modern world.

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[34] Often labelled the council of the Church about the Church. Annemarie C. Mayer, "The Second Vatican Council 50th Anniversary: Visions and Re-Visions," *International journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 14, no. 4 (October 2, 2014): 338.

[35] Edward P. Hahnenberg, *A Concise Guide to the Documents of Vatican II*, Kindle Edition. (Cincinnati, Ohio: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2007), Loc. 167-191.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Rush, *The Vision of Vatican II: Its Fundamental Principles*, ebook. Ormond Rush notes that "A total of 173 observers and guests, from forty-one different non-Catholic churches, ecclesial communities, and representative bodies, were also in attendance across the four years." Ibid.

[38] The sixteen documents are as follows: *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People AG; *Ad Gentes*, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity; *Christus Dominus*, Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church; *Dignitatis Humanae*, Declaration on Religious Liberty; *Dei Verbum*, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation; *Gravissimum Educationis*, Declaration on Christian Education; *Gaudium et Spes,* Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World; *Inter Mirifica*, Decree on the Mass Media; *Lumen Gentium*, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church; *Nostra Aetate*, Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions; *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, Decree on the Catholic Eastern Churches OT;

The Council's teachings on Scripture are found in the six chapters of the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*, which will be explored below.

6.3.1 Perspective at Vatican II

Vatican II identified the need for the renewal of the church. According to Rush, achieving this "demands re-receiving many of the past forms and practices of the tradition; interpretation of these past forms and practices for the present calls for critical adaptation for new times and contexts if genuine renewal is to take place."[39]

The two words, *ressourcement* ("return to the sources") and *aggiornamento*, are used throughout Vatican II to address and define the Church's aim of renewal.[40] The Catholic Church employed these words as frames through which it could understand itself. Specifically, the terms were employed to aid an understanding of its tradition and address questions about its relevance and ongoing authority.[41] While notable, the word 'aggiornamento' is difficult to translate and often misused or misrepresented. Mayer notes,

> It does not simply mean adapting to today. It means making Tradition understood as the truth that has been believed thus far, present in its newness, thus making it also

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Optatam Totius, Decree on the Training of Priests; *Perfectae Caritatis*, Decree on the Up-to-Date Renewal of Religious Life; *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests; *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, Decree on Ecumenism. For an overview of each document see Hahnenberg, *A Concise Guide to the Documents of Vatican II*.

[39] Rush, *The Vision of Vatican II: Its Fundamental Principles*, ebook.

[40] Eduardo Echeverria, "'Ressourcement,' 'Aggiornamento,' and Vatican II in Ecumenical Perspective," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, July 26, 2014, accessed January 11, 2022, https://www.hprweb.com/2014/07/ressourcement-aggiornamento-and-vatican-ii-in-ecumenical-perspective/.

[41] Mayer, "The Second Vatican Council 50th Anniversary," 338.

true and authoritative in the future. Such truth is put into a new light and into a more comprehensive horizon; it shines anew and so becomes, in a certain sense, newly visible. Such 'renewal' along the lines of aggiornamento is different from mere innovation. It means a renewal along the lines of ressourcement, going back to the sources, so that the old, original and lastingly valid Tradition does not appear old but newly asserts itself as the message of the gospel. This gospel is never just familiar, but also eternally new.[42]

If Christian teaching is to validate its claim, particularly relating to Scripture, it requires *ressourcement*.[43] The purpose is to "return to the sources" of the Christian faith and rediscover their truth and meaning so they can accommodate the critical challenges of the contemporary world. According to Eduardo Echeverria, "*aggiornamento* is essentially a question of a new and wider contextualization, with the aim of finding new ways to rethink and reformulate the fundamental affirmations of the Christian faith in order to more effectively communicate the Gospel."[44]

Aggiornamento does not suggest disinterest in the Catholic tradition, as the program of *ressourcement* was also attempting to go deeper into the tradition to retrieve resources that were important and which may have been overlooked or neglected.[45] "Aggiornamento became an almost magical word, bringing the tradition up to date."[46]

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[42] Ibid., 338–339.

[43] James Heft, "Preface," in *After Vatican II: Trajectories and Hermeneutics*, ed. James Heft and John W. O'Malley (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2012), xviii.

[44] Echeverria, "'Ressourcement,' 'Aggiornamento,' and Vatican II in Ecumenical Perspective."

[45] M. Cathleen Kaveny, "Vatican II and Moral Theology," in *After Vatican II: Trajectories and Hermeneutics*, ed. James Heft and John W. O'Malley (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2012), 53.

[46] Godfried Danneels, "The Ongoing Agenda: A Council Unlike Any Other," in *The Second Vatican Council: Celebrating Its Achievements and the Future*, ed. Gavin D'Costa and Emma Harris (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 23.

Ressourcement referred to the work of an entire generation of scholars before the council. Scholars were now retrieving a vibrant and diverse tradition, and Bishops embraced the historical-conscious rather than the prevailing ahistorical approach of scholasticism.[47] Rush notes, "This historical consciousness, mediated to them through the theologians, made the bishops aware of diverse ways of being Catholic beyond that of Tridentine Catholicism which had so dominated the previous four hundred years."[48] In many ways, one can see an example of the hermeneutical circle at work. Rush remarks "what is retrieved from the past must… be updated for the present, just as the present can provide new perspectives for interpreting the past."[49]

6.3.2 *Dei Verbum*

While *Divino Afflante Spiritu* cleared the way for Catholic participation in critical biblical scholarship during Pope Pius XII's reign, following his death in 1958, a new movement emerged that opposed critical scholarship. The debate centred around the church's value and practice of critical methods.[50] The period coincided with the lead-up to the Second Vatican Council's deliberations on revelation, which ultimately produced the document *Dei Verbum*.[51] The impact and ongoing influence of *Dei Verbum* can be seen in the comments

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[47] Ormond Rush, "Australia and Vatican II: Bringing Home the Vision," *Australasian Catholic Record* 89, no. 4 (January 10, 2012): 391–392.

[48] Ibid., 392.

[49] Ormond Rush, "Conciliar Hermeneutics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Vatican II*, ed. Richard R. Gaillardetz, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2020), 99.

[50] The debate concerning "critical biblical scholarship continued through to the 1960s. In February 1960, John XIII addressed the Pontifical Biblical Institute. He cautioned against employing the critical methods. Prior, *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis*, 133. The institute had originally been set up by Pius X, in 1909, it specialised in research and teaching, Pius included elements of the historical-critical method in his instructions for the curriculum. Ibid., 110. The debate also concerned modern ways of describing revelation.Ibid., 149.

[51] Prior, *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis*, 124.

of Pope Francis, who notes that "The Second Vatican Council gave great impulse to the rediscovery of the word of God, thanks to its Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*, a document that deserves to be read and ever anew."[52]

The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum,* was promulgated on November 18, 1965. It is one of two dogmatic constitutions issued by the Second Vatican Council.[53] Although considered a fundamental doctrinal document of the Council, the draft was intensely debated, and the majority initially rejected it. However, the document was withdrawn after Pope John's intervention, and a special commission prepared a new version.[54] As the crown jewel of Vatican II and the pillar of conciliar work, it considers the central elements of the Catholic faith: scripture, tradition and magisterium.[55] These elements are incorporated in the document's theme introduced as "divine revelation and how it is handed on".[56]   According to Senior, *Dei Verbum* crowned the teaching of *Divino Afflante Spiritu* and set the tone for all future teaching on Scripture.[57] A précis of *Dei Verbum's* six chapters is considered below.

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[52] Pope Francis, "Foreword," in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Donald Senior et al., ebook. (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021), ebook, accessed January 26, 2022, https://www.theologyandreligiononline.com/encyclopedia?docid=b-9781350182875.

[53] The other is *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church.

[54] Senior, "Interpreting the Scripture: The Church and the Modern Catholic Biblical Renewal," ebook.

[55] Danneels, "The Ongoing Agenda: A Council Unlike Any Other," 26. Danneels remarks, "Verbum Dei, which consumed so much time and discussion, is unfortunately barely read today." Ibid.

[56] Vatican II Council, "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation: Dei Verbum.," Preface.

[57] Senior, "Interpreting the Scripture: The Church and the Modern Catholic Biblical Renewal," ebook.

6.3.2.1 Chapter One: Revelation Itself

A primary focus of *Dei Verbum* is to proclaim a Catholic understanding of the Bible as the "word of God". According to Ormerod, "This understanding is placed within the larger context of the Church's understanding of revelation itself."[58] The language employed in the document does not speak of revelation about God or, indeed, words about God. Instead, it concerns a revelation of God[59] or what Hahnenberg describes as "a living encounter."[60] Chapter one, *Revelation Itself*,[61] focuses on a personal approach to revelation; not only does God reveal his will, but he also reveals himself.[62] The revelation is not understood as a distant voice from the past; instead, it is continuous through the presence of the Holy Spirit.[63] We see alignment with the views of Pentecostals, as highlighted by Ellington in the previous chapter,[64] for whom the revelation in Scripture is fluid and not simply a past event. It is a revelation that is re-encountered in the present.[65] In the Catholic context, Prior states, "Faith expressed through obedience is required as a response to the revelation."[66]

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[58] Neil Ormerod, "Catholic Australia," *Dei Verbum, Divine Revelation*, 2022, accessed January 30, 2022, https://www.catholicaustralia.com.au/church-documents/vatican-ii-documents.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Hahnenberg, *A Concise Guide to the Documents of Vatican II*, Loc 653.

[61] *DV* 2-6.

[62] Hahnenberg, *A Concise Guide to the Documents of Vatican II*, Loc 656. "The goal of this revelation is to invite people into fellowship with God and with one another." Ibid. See *DV* 2.

[63] Prior, *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis*, 150.

[64] See section 5.3.6.

[65] Ellington, "Scripture: Finding One's Place in God's Story," 64.

[66] Prior, *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis*, 150.

6.3.2.2 Chapter Two: The Transmission of Divine Revelation

The second chapter, *The Transmission of Divine Revelation*,[67] considers the relationship between Scripture and tradition in transmitting divine revelation. An understanding of this relationship has been a contentious topic since the Reformation.[68] Hahnenberg notes,

> When the Reformers cried out, "Scripture alone!" the Catholic church replied, "Tradition too!" The church wanted to protect what it saw as legitimate historical developments in doctrine, sacramental practice and church structure against the Reformers' claim that these were unbiblical. And so, many Catholics defended later church tradition as a separate, almost independent source of revelation alongside the Bible.[69]

The "two-source theory" of revelation appeared in the draft document (*De Fontibus Revelationis*); it was argued that it was too simplistic and ultimately functioned to conceal God as the cohesive whole and one source of revelation. Hence, the final document only posits one source of revelation.[70] It mentions "divine wellspring"[71] and notes that a "Sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God, committed to the Church."[72] While the magisterium is tasked with interpreting the word of God with the help of the Holy Spirit, it is not "above the word of God, but serves it".[73] Hence,

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[67] *DV* 7-10.

[68] Hahnenberg, *A Concise Guide to the Documents of Vatican II*, Loc 663.

[69] Ibid., Loc 652.

[70] Ibid., Loc 670.

[71] See *DV* 9.

[72] See *DV* 10.

[73] Ibid.

It is clear, therefore, that sacred tradition, Sacred Scripture and the teaching authority of the Church, in accord with God's most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others, and that all together and each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls.[74]

6.3.2.3 Chapter Three: Sacred Scripture, Its Inspiration and Divine Interpretation

The third chapter, *Sacred Scripture, Its Inspiration and Divine Interpretation,*[75] comprises the fundamental principles of how the biblical text should be approached. It continues the instructions in *Divino Afflante Spiritu* by urging biblical scholars to read the biblical text within its historical context.[76]

While the chapter focuses on the inspiration and interpretation of Scripture, it features the same emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit, "for the sake of our salvation,"[77] as found in chapter two, where the goal of interpretation is "the salvation of souls".[78] This limited the inerrancy of the Scriptures and allowed the historical-critical method to be used more fully. In the chapter, there is also an affirmation of the divine-human cooperation in authorship,[79] whereby the human authors are not simply understood as mechanical devices taking some form of dictation. God spoke through their human abilities and limitations in "human

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[74] *DV* 10

[75] *DV* 11-13.

[76] Ormerod, "Catholic Australia."

[77] *DV* 11.

[78] *DV* 10; Matthew Levering, "The Scriptures and Their Interpretation," in *The Oxford Handbook of Catholic Theology*, ed. Lewis Ayres and Medi Ann Volpe, by Matthew Levering (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 47–48.

[79] *DV* 12; Prior, *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis*, 150.

fashion"[80]; as such, the human authors remain "true authors".[81] We are also reminded that as the Spirit inspires the Scriptures, they must be read in the Spirit.[82] Pentecostals also affirm this, as noted in the previous chapter.

The chapter reaffirms *Divino Afflante Spiritu* by emphasising the study of the literal meaning of the biblical text.[83] The interpreter needs to investigate the intentions of the sacred writer. As part of this investigation, one must consider the "literary forms" and whether the text is historical, poetic, or prophetic. The "customary and characteristic styles of… speaking and narrating which prevailed at the time of the sacred writer"[84] must be investigated to understand what the author intended to convey.[85] Suppose one considers the meaning and significance of this warrant. It is sanctioned to pay attention to the "customary and characteristic styles … of speaking and narrating that prevailed at the time of the sacred writer" this in and of itself provides a full warrant for the Historical-Critical Method and associated modes of understanding the text. While Pius XII's *Divino Afflante Spiritu* tentatively opened up to historical-critical scholarship, emphasising *DV* 12, Rush notes that "*Dei Verbum* would go on to approve such historical-critical methods for the interpretation of the biblical writings and for viewing the whole tradition process."[86] The council recognised the text's historically conditioned origin and used an appropriate method to interpret that text, the Historical-Critical Method.

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[80] *DV* 11.

[81] Ibid.; Hahnenberg, *A Concise Guide to the Documents of Vatican II*, Loc 684.

[82] *DV* 11

[83] Senior, "Interpreting the Scripture: The Church and the Modern Catholic Biblical Renewal," ebook.

[84] *DV* 12.

[85] *DV* 12.

[86] Rush, *The Vision of Vatican II: Its Fundamental Principles*, ebook.

6.3.2.4 Chapter Four: The Old Testament

The fourth chapter, *The Old Testament*,[87] affirms the lasting and permanent value of the

OT[88] and speaks of its principal purpose, which serves "to prepare for the coming of

Christ".[89] This chapter also affirms the integrity of the entire biblical text, both OT and NT.

In reference to the OT, it states, "These books, though they also contain some things which

are incomplete and temporary, nevertheless show us true divine pedagogy."[90] The chapter

also makes reference to the relationship with the NT books and states that "God, the inspirer

and author of both Testaments, wisely arranged that the New Testament be hidden in the

Old and the Old be made manifest in the New."[91]

6.3.2.5 Chapter Five: The New Testament

The fifth chapter, *The New Testament*,[92] considers the historical nature of the Gospels. In

addition to maintaining that the Gospels are of apostolic origin,[93] the Church upholds their

historicity.[94] However, some bishops were dissatisfied with early drafts due to the wording

stating that the Gospel authors "told the honest truth" about Jesus. They desired a greater

and more explicit affirmation concerning the Gospels and how they accurately reflected the

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[87] *DV* 14-16.

[88] *DV* 14: Prior, *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis*, 151.

[89] *DV* 15.

[90] *DV* 15.

[91] *DV* 16.

[92] *DV* 17-20.

[93] DV 18.

[94] DV19.

historical facts of Jesus' life.[95] Hahnenberg notes that, "[t]he commission responded by affirming the general historical character of the Gospels, without insisting that every last detail of Jesus' life is factually represented."[96]

After the ascension, the apostles, "instructed by the glorious events of Christ's life and taught by the light of the Spirit of truth,"[97] were able to gain a clearer understanding of what Christ had said and done. Hence, the apostle's writings can be understood when our minds are enlightened by the Holy Spirit.[98] While the ACC has a theological supplement for the ACC statement of beliefs, it does not distinguish between the Old and New Testaments when dealing with inspiration and authority.

6.3.2.6 Chapter Six: Scripture in the Life of the Church

The sixth and final chapter, *Scripture in the life of the Church*,[99] makes key recommendations regarding the church's teaching and practice. Senior notes these in the recent *Jerome Bible Commentary*. They are as follows: (a) It calls for biblically inspired preaching[100], "all the preaching of the Church must be nourished and regulated by Sacred

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[95] Hahnenberg, *A Concise Guide to the Documents of Vatican II*, Loc 712.

[96] Ibid. Hahnenberg notes that, "This chapter was helped by a recently published document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, "The Historical Truth of the Gospels" (1964). This document pointed out that the four Gospels are most likely not the writings of eyewitnesses. Rather, the Gospels developed through a process that can be described in three stages: (1) the ministry of Jesus, (2) a period of oral transmission and preaching by the apostles, and (3) the actual composition of the Gospels by evangelists who drew on the oral traditions and retold the story of Jesus in light of the situations in their own churches." Ibid., Loc 717.

[97] *DV* 19.

[98] Levering, "The Scriptures and Their Interpretation," 48.

[99] *DV* 21-26.

[100] Senior, "Interpreting the Scripture: The Church and the Modern Catholic Biblical Renewal," ebook.

Scripture".[101] (b) It urged that everyone should have access to the Word of God. The council

ordered appropriate translations be produced so that the Scriptures were comprehensible.[102]

Furthermore, they should include suitable notes or comments to facilitate interpretation.[103]

(c) It called for increased study of Scripture.[104] (d) "It encouraged increased use of Scripture

in theology… (e) "Priest, deacons, and catechists, as well as religious, were encouraged to

be steeped in prayerful study of Scripture." [105] (f) It was the duty of the Bishops to provide

suitable instruction in the use of Scriptures, particularly the NT and especially the Gospels,

achieved by providing suitable translations with "adequate explanation". [106] (g) Finally,

Senior points to the recommendation that "editions of the Sacred Scriptures, provided with

suitable footnotes, should be prepared also for the use of non-Christians and adapted to their

situation."[107]

6.3.3 Hermeneutical Principles from *Dei Verbum*

Within the six chapters of *Dei Verbum,* one finds explicit teaching on Scripture and

interpretation. While *Dei Verbum* does not directly discuss the historical-critical method,

it engages with its various elements and thus provides hermeneutical principles.

Compared with the earlier ecclesial documents, a significant and defining feature of *Dei*

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[101] *DV* 21

[102] Hahnenberg, *A Concise Guide to the Documents of Vatican II*, Loc 724; Senior, "Interpreting the Scripture: The Church and the Modern Catholic Biblical Renewal," ebook.

[103] Prior, *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis*, 153. While suitable translations were to be made available, the ancient translations such as the LXX and particularly the Vulgate, should be respected

[104] *DV* 23. Senior notes "This call for an increase of biblical scholarship reaffirmed a point made in *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, which together with *Dei Verbum* would lead to a resurgence of Catholic biblical scholarship." Senior, "Interpreting the Scripture: The Church and the Modern Catholic Biblical Renewal," ebook.

[105] Ibid. See *DV* 24.

[106] Ibid. See *DV* 25.   .

[107] *DV* 25; Senior, "Interpreting the Scripture: The Church and the Modern Catholic Biblical Renewal," ebook.

Verbum is the reference to instrumentality. *Dei Verbum* refers to human authors as "true authors"[108] who were "employed"[109] by God. The reflection on and a commitment to recontextualise traditional beliefs evidenced within and by the document makes space for the human element in the authorship of the biblical text. It is also recognised that human authorship was committed only to writing what God wanted; hence the divine element of the biblical text is respected. Hence, the Holy Spirit also affirmed what the inspired authors affirmed.[110]

*DV*12 states that "the interpreter of Sacred Scripture, in order to see clearly what God wanted to communicate to us, should carefully investigate what meaning the sacred writers really intended, and what God wanted to manifest by means of their words." From this statement, the principle regarding interpreting the biblical text can be determined. While the words suggest that the interpreter must establish the *literal sense*, one must also have an ear towards the divine author[111], as the document states that "no less serious attention must be given to the content and unity of the whole of Scripture if the meaning of the sacred texts is to be correctly worked out. The living tradition of the whole Church must be considered along with the harmony which exists between elements of the faith."[112] Two hermeneutical principles can be gained from *Dei Verbum*, first, that of the human authors' intent, and second, that of maintaining the integrity of the biblical texts. The guiding

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[108] *DV* 11.

[109] *DV* 12.

[110] Prior, *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis*, 154. *Dei Verbum* state that, "it follows that the books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching solidly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted put into sacred writings." *DV* 11. *DV*, 11.

[111] Prior, *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis*, 154.

[112] *DV* 12.

principles within *Dei Verbum* necessitate the use of the historical-critical method.[113] Prior notes that "[t]he elements of the HCM [historical-critical method] as found in Dei Verbum are presented according to their individual criticisms: philology-grammatical criticism, textual criticism, literary-source criticism, genre-form criticism, and historical criticism."[114]

DV 12 maintains that we must take note of characteristic patterns of speaking and narrating. This necessitates a study of philology, historical criticism, and literary criticism. *DV* 22 requires modern translations of the biblical text and, thus, the study of ancient languages and philology.[115] Prior notes that while there is no specific mention of textual criticism in the document, as its need was no longer debated, there is an allusion to textual criticism in *DV* 22.[116] Regarding source criticism, *DV* 19 refers to possible pre-gospel writings selected by the evangelists, hence source material. The study and analysis of the author's use of source material allow for a better understanding of the author's intent. *DV* 12, reminiscent of *Divino Afflante Spiritu,* recognises the significance of literary forms, whereby the interpreter must identify the historically conditioned nature of language and literary forms such as history and poetry.[117]

While several immediate steps were taken to implement *Dei Verbum*, this did not mean that the various tension within the church was resolved. Senior notes that "[t]he relationship of historical-critical methodology with the church's traditional interest in

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[113] Prior, *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis*, 154–155.

[114] Ibid., 155.

[115] Ibid.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid.

the theological and pastoral meaning of the Scriptures would remain an underlying and often contentious issue in the post-conciliar church."[118]

6.4 *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*

In 1971, the category and status of the PBC were changed by Pope Paul VI.[119] It was reconstituted "as a consultative body rather than a part of the magisterium. The new commission consisted of twenty Catholic biblical scholars who specialised in biblical exegesis. The task of this group of experts was to guide the magisterium and offer learned advice on matters of current interest and importance concerning the Bible and its interpretation. [120]

In 1993, 50 years after *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, one of the first major documents of the new commission was *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (hereafter *IBC*[121]). The document was one of the most important documents regarding Roman Catholic Biblical scholarship of the time. It reaffirmed the Church's commitment to a critical interpretation

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[118] Senior, "Interpreting the Scripture: The Church and the Modern Catholic Biblical Renewal," ebook.

Examples of the immediate impact of the council include the publication of a revised Lectionary, in Latin in 1969 and in English in 1970. Alongside the liturgical reform was the appearance of new translations based on the original languages, for example, the *New American Bible* in 1970. Based on the recommendation concerning popular access to the Scriptures, aids were produced, such as commentaries and reading guides. As a result of the renewal of Catholic theology, an increasing number of works were produced in dogmatic theology, moral theology, and ecclesiology that had a strong biblical basis. Ibid.

[119] Healy, "Biblical Interpretation since Divino Afflante Spiritu," 771.

[120] Ibid. "In the last half century, the commission has published several major documents: *The Historicity of the Gospels* (1964), *Sacred Scripture and Christology* (1984), *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (1993), *The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible* (2001), *The Bible and Morality: Biblical Roots of Christian Conduct* (2008), and *The Inspiration and Truth of Sacred Scripture* (2014)." Healy, "Biblical Interpretation since Divino Afflante Spiritu," 771

[121] Content of *IBC* will be cited as follow, *IBC*, (section title e.g., Hermeneutical Questions), (subsection letter).

of the Bible. It became one of the most highly influential contributions to Catholic biblical scholarship. As the document had no intrinsic authority, it could not officially be adopted as the Church's authorised shift in teaching. However, it became one of the most important documents on biblical interpretation since *Dei Verbum*.[122] Lewis Ayres and Stephen Fowl state that "[i]n general, it is fair to say that *Interpretation* as a whole represents the most developed and prominent apology for the *necessary* priority of historical-critical exegetical methods yet offered by Roman Catholic scholars."[123]

If one considers the occasion of the document, which the Biblical Commission recounts in its introduction, then the acceptance of the various scientific methods through *Providentissimus Deus*, *Divino afflante Spiritu*, and *Dei Verbum*[124] meant the application of the various methods was positive for the advancement of biblical scholarship within the Catholic Church.[125] The document states, "All those who have acquired a solid formation in this area [biblical studies] consider it quite impossible to return to a precritical level of interpretation, a level which they now rightly judge to be quite inadequate."[126] However, after Vatican II, following the ascendancy of the historical-critical method as the leading scientific method, objections arose from scholars who proposed alternative methods and the laity, who considered the historical-critical method insufficient when dealing with matters of Christian faith.[127] For those who had opposed scientific exegesis at the outset, their

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[122] Ayres and Fowl, "(Mis)Reading the Face of God," 514.

[123] Ibid., 515.

[124] Not to mention the Pontifical Biblical Commission's *Sancta Mater Ecclesia* (1964) which is not considered here.

[125] Peter Williamson, *Catholic Principles for Interpreting Scripture: A Study of the Pontifical Biblical Commission's The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, 22 (Roma: Pontificio Istituto biblico, 2001), 17.

[126] *IBC,* Introduction, A.

[127] Williamson, *Catholic Principles for Interpreting Scripture*, 17.

position was strengthened. The method was considered useless due to the diverse interpretations that ultimately fuelled doubt and confusion at a congregational level. The method was also considered elitist in many ways, as it restricted access to the Bible to experts.[128] This led many to employ simpler approaches that were more or even exclusively synchronistic and highly subjective "spiritual" readings. Williamson notes that "[i]n consequence, some people have resorted to simplistic readings of the Bible for "immediate answers to all kinds of questions."[129] Not that dissimilar to many parts of the pentecostal movement.

IBC carries a detailed exposition of the core critical methods. The purpose of the document itself is outlined in the following statement taken from the document:

> It is, then, appropriate to give serious consideration to the various aspects of the present situation as regards the interpretation of the Bible—to attend to the criticisms and the complaints, as also to the hopes and aspirations which are being expressed in this matter, to assess the possibilities opened up by the new methods and approaches and, finally, to try to determine more precisely the direction which best corresponds to the mission of exegesis in the Catholic Church.[130]

The main focus of the document is exegesis.

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[128] Ibid. *IBC,* Introduction, A.

[129] Ibid. *IBC,* Introduction, A.

[130] Ibid., 18.

6.4.1 The Content of *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*

Beyond the introduction and conclusion*, IBC* has four main sections. Chapter one, *Methods and Approaches for Interpretation*, surveys various methods and approaches to biblical interpretation and offers an assessment of the opportunities they offer along with the limitations they contain. Chapter two, *Hermeneutical Questions*, examines specific hermeneutical questions, including the usefulness of exegesis and the meaning of inspired Scripture. Chapter three, *Characteristics of Catholic Interpretation*, reflects on interpretation in the biblical tradition. It considers interpretation within the tradition of the Church and modern-day principles for the task of exegesis. Finally, chapter four, *Relationship with Other Theological Disciplines*, considers biblical interpretation in the life of the church. [131]

In terms of the response to the document, Peter Williamson notes,

> Since its publication more than a hundred reviews and reflections on the IBC have appeared. Not surprisingly, Catholic exegetes wrote most of them, although not a few theologians, journalists, Protestant exegetes and at least one Jewish scholar also offered their perspectives. Almost every review was positive. Reviewers particularly praised the review of contemporary approaches for its scholarly quality and openness.[132]

As noted above, reasons for introducing the document were given based on confusion within the Church regarding the matter of biblical interpretation, particularly the use of the historical-critical method in Catholic exegesis. The positive review may be explained by considering the document more closely.

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[131] Fitzmyer, "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church Today," 89.

[132] Williamson, *Catholic Principles for Interpreting Scripture*, 26. Williamson also notes, "When the Commission was criticized, usually some specific section was singled out (which varied among reviewers), while the overall effort was commended." Ibid.

6.4.2 Part One: Methods and Approaches

 The document evaluates various methodologies and approaches in current use within biblical interpretation.[133] The various methods and approaches[134] are divided into either diachronic or synchronic. The first method considered is the historical-critical method, which highlights its paramountcy.[135] A point noted by Fitzmyer, who remarks, "What is significant in the document is the primacy of place that the Commission gives to the historical-critical method, especially at a time when many people have been calling for consideration of other aspects of biblical interpretation."[136] The PBC explicitly endorses the historical-critical method of the Bible. The method was considered indispensable for biblical interpretation and had the support of Pius XII and the Biblical Commission in previous documents, hence the continued support in the 1993 document. Part one also considers more recent approaches to the Bible.[137] The first approaches are based on tradition, such as canonical criticism. The second set of approaches is taken from the human sciences, such as sociological or anthropological—finally, the contextual approaches from

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[133] Part one is divided in to six sections. A and B address method, C, D, and E address approaches and F addresses "Lecture fondamentaliste", according to Fitzmyer this is mistranslated in the English translation as "Fundamentalist Interpretation". The choice of section heading is deliberate as the Commission did not want "to accord this mode of reading the status of an interpretative method or approach."Fitzmyer, "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church Today," 90.

[134] The distinction between methods and approaches is highlighted the introduction section, it states, "

By an exegetical *method*, we understand a group of scientific procedures employed in order to explain texts. We speak of an *approach* when it is a question of an inquiry proceeding from a particular point of view."

IBC, Introduction, B.

[135] Williamson, *Catholic Principles for Interpreting Scripture*, 21; Prior, *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis*, 235. However, Williamson notes that the elevated status of literary approaches suggest that the historical-critical method does not enjoy an exclusive right as the only scientific approach to the text. Williamson, *Catholic Principles for Interpreting Scripture*, 21.

[136] Fitzmyer, "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church Today," 89.

[137] See sections C-E

the contemporary world, such as feminism.[138] Fitzmyer writes, "Each of these approaches has emphasised synchronic aspects of the Bible and has brought further refinement to the basic method in many instances. But again, none of them is adequate to supplant the historical-critical method."[139] Part one concludes[140] with a warning against using the "Lecture fondamentaliste" mode of reading because it is considered to arise from an ideology that is not biblical.[141]

6.4.3 Part Two: Hermeneutical Questions

The second part of the document addresses methodology within hermeneutical understanding. It is considered in two ways. "First, using modern hermeneutics, the Bible is considered a written text. Second, using the *senses of Scripture,* the Bible is discussed as an inspired text."[142]

Reflecting on the nature of the text, the document draws on the work of Gadamer and Ricœur. Regarding Gadamer, there is a reference to the hermeneutical circle and pre-conceptions affecting understanding, which is understood as arising from "the tradition which carries us".[143] The PBC document also refers to *Horizontverschmelzung* and the associated *Zugehörigkeit,* highlighting the affinity between the interpreter and the object, in

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[138] Fitzmyer, "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church Today," 90.

[139] Ibid.

[140] See section F.

[141] Fitzmyer, "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church Today," 90.

[142] Prior, *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis*, 235.

[143] *IBC*, Hermeneutical Questions, A.; Senior, "Interpreting the Scripture: The Church and the Modern Catholic Biblical Renewal," ebook.

this case, the biblical text.[144] The document affirms, "[t]he understanding of a text always entails an enhanced understanding of oneself."[145]

Included in the main insights is an acknowledgement that while the original author's intent is difficult to retrieve, it does not suggest that there is only one meaning to be had. The biblical text takes on additional meaning within varying contexts as it evolves over time and is based on its relationship to the interpreter.[146] This insight echoes the comments of Grey in chapter two concerning Pentecostals and contextual meaning. She notes, "the meaning of the text differs according to the individual context in which it is read. This provides multiple interpretations according to the individual's experience and potentially results in multiple meanings."[147]

With reference to Ricœur and distanciation PBC notes,

> A first distancing occurs between the text and its author, for, once produced, the text takes on a certain autonomy in relation to its author; it begins its own career of meaning. Another distancing exists between the text and its successive readers; these have to respect the world of the text in its otherness.[148]

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[144] *IBC*, Hermeneutical Questions, A.

[145] Senior, "Interpreting the Scripture: The Church and the Modern Catholic Biblical Renewal," ebook.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*, 17.

[148] *IBC*, Hermeneutical Questions, A.

The relationship between the interpreter and the text is an essential element of the interpretive process. Hence, any biblical interpretation must acknowledge more than a historical analysis of the text and its origin,[149] PBC notes,

> Thus, the methods of literary and historical analysis are necessary for interpretation. Yet the meaning of a text can be fully grasped only as it is actualized in the lives of readers who appropriate it. Beginning with their situation, they are summoned to uncover new meanings, along the fundamental line of meaning indicated by the text.[150]

The document also considers the biblical text's various levels of meaning or "senses". The "literal sense" refers to the meaning intended by the original author in the historical context. Although this "literal sense" is primary, as noted above, it does not exhaust other possible meanings. There is also a "spiritual sense", which is read from a faith perspective; while this perspective can reveal new meaning, it must be bound to the original, literal meaning.[151] The document also refers to the "fuller sense", defined as a deeper meaning of the text, although as stated by the PBC, "one might think of the "fuller sense" as another way of indicating the spiritual sense."[152] However, the "fuller sense" is only understood in this way when the spiritual sense is distinct for the literal senses.

The PBC states, "the Holy Spirit, principal author of the Bible, can guide human authors in the choice of expressions in such a way that the latter will express a truth to the fullest depths of which the authors themselves do not perceive. This deeper truth will be more fully

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[149] Senior, "Interpreting the Scripture: The Church and the Modern Catholic Biblical Renewal," ebook.

[150] *IBC*, Hermeneutical Questions, A.

[151] *IBC*, Hermeneutical Questions, A.; Senior, "Interpreting the Scripture: The Church and the Modern Catholic Biblical Renewal," ebook.

[152] *IBC*, Hermeneutical Questions, A.

revealed in the course of time."[153] Prior notes that the "fuller sense" has not previously been mentioned in an ecclesial document. He further writes, "[t]he term is carefully presented, and warning is given to avoid subjective interpretation."[154]

6.4.4 Part Three: Characteristics of Catholic Interpretation

Senior notes that the primary purpose of part three of the document is that it claims that the Catholic Church does not hold to a particular scientific method as its own.[155] PBC defines the characteristics of Catholic exegesis as follows:

> Catholic exegesis is that it deliberately places itself within the living tradition of the church, whose first concern is fidelity to the revelation attested by the Bible. Modern hermeneutics has made clear, as we have noted, the impossibility of interpreting a text without starting from a "pre-understanding" of one type or another. Catholic exegetes approach the biblical text with a pre- understanding which holds closely together modern scientific culture and the religious tradition emanating from Israel and from the early Christian community. Their interpretation stands thereby in continuity with a dynamic pattern of interpretation that is found within the Bible itself and continues in the life of the church. This dynamic pattern corresponds to the requirement that there be a lived affinity between the interpreter and the object, an affinity which constitutes, in fact, one of the conditions that makes the entire exegetical enterprise possible.[156]

Several elements are characterised as the Catholic exegetical approach. The use of the historical-critical method is emphasised here.[157] At the same time, Catholic exegetes interpret the text with a pre-understanding that holds both the modern scientific method and religious tradition together, resulting in the dynamic progression of understanding.

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[153] *IBC*, Characteristics of Catholic Interpretation, B.

[154] Prior, *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis*, 240, n31.

[155] *IBC*, Characteristics of Catholic Interpretation, introduction. Senior, "Interpreting the Scripture: The Church and the Modern Catholic Biblical Renewal," ebook.

[156] *IBC*, Characteristics of Catholic Interpretation, introduction.

[157] Senior, "Interpreting the Scripture: The Church and the Modern Catholic Biblical Renewal," ebook.

Prior notes that this "[d]ynamic understanding of the text continues to develop in the tradition of the church. The document points out the role of the Holy Spirit in the development of a deeper understanding and progressive clarification of the received revelation."[158]

Under section C, *The Task of the Exegete*, the document reminds us that exegesis is the work of those within an ecclesial setting and those within scholarship. PBC states,

> Their common task is not finished when they have simply determined sources, defined forms or explained literary procedures. They arrive at the true goal of their work only when they have explained the meaning of the biblical text as God's word for today. To this end they must take into consideration the various hermeneutical perspectives which help toward grasping the contemporary meaning of the biblical message and which make it responsive to the needs of those who read Scripture today[159]

The document references the teaching of exegesis within the context of faculties of theology and seminaries and asserts that "[i]t is desirable that the teaching of exegesis be carried out by both men and women. More technical in university faculties, this teaching will have a more directly pastoral orientation in seminaries."[160] In terms of the practice of exegesis, the PBC also stresses that "care must be taken to avoid a one-sided approach that would restrict itself, on the one hand, to a spiritual commentary empty of historical-critical grounding or, on the other, to a historical-critical commentary lacking doctrinal or spiritual content."[161]

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[158] Prior, *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis*, 241.; *IBC*, Characteristics of Catholic Interpretation, B.

[159] *IBC*, Characteristics of Catholic Interpretation, C.

[160] Ibid.

[161] Ibid.

6.4.5 Part Four: Interpretation of the Bible in the Church

This part of the document deals specifically with interpretation in the life of the Church. It deals with three areas: actualisation, inculturation, and the use of the Bible in a church service. Actualisation is reading or seeking to hear the biblical text in the present day.[162] Prior notes, "[t]he aim of actualisation is to respect the circumstances of the past while hermeneutically addressing the present."[163] The PBC encourages the careful practice of actualisation to avoid a purely subjective reading of the biblical text.

> It is the living tradition of the community of faith that stimulates the task of actualization. This community places itself in explicit continuity with the communities which gave rise to Scripture and which preserved and handed it on. In the process of actualization, tradition plays a double role: On the one hand, it provides protection against deviant interpretations; on the other hand, it ensures the transmission of the original dynamism.[164]

This part of the document speaks about the use of the Bible in various contexts; in the context of pastoral ministry and hermeneutical principles, it states,

> The explanation of the biblical texts given in the course of the homily cannot enter into great detail. It is, accordingly, fitting to explain the central contribution of texts, that which is most enlightening for faith and most stimulating for the progress of the Christian life, both on the community and individual level. Presenting this central contribution means striving to achieve its actualization and inculturation, in accordance with what has been said above. Good hermeneutical principles are necessary to attain this end. Want of preparation in this area leads to the temptation to avoid plumbing the depths of the biblical readings and to being content simply to moralize or to speak of contemporary issues in a way that fails to shed upon them the light of God's word.[165]

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[162] Prior, *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis*, 243.

[163] Ibid.

[164] *IBC*, Interpretation of the Bible in the Church, A

[165] *IBC*, Interpretation of the Bible in the Church, C.

The document concludes that biblical interpretation should be characterised to apply the Bible's message to contemporary situations and is expressed in contemporary language. It reminds us that Catholic interpretation should be attentive to "inculturation". This is achieved through sensitive interpretation of various languages and cultures.[166] The document identifies two specific conclusions. The first is that biblical exegesis is an "indispensable task", and the second relates to the use of the historical-critical method; while it has limitations, it is required in the interpretive process due to the very nature of the biblical text.[167]

6.5 Summary

While we can track the development of the Catholic biblical interpretation via the various documents that have emerged, particularly *Dei Verbum* and *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church,* it is evident that there are several points of contact between the Catholic and Pentecostal traditions. In considering these documents, I am not proposing a framework for Pentecostal hermeneutics. Instead, what can be observed is how a tradition outside that of the Pentecostal tradition has engaged with the hermeneutical issue. As a part of the Catholic discussion, we arrive at the document *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church,* which defends the use of the historical-critical method as part of the interpretive process of the biblical text. As noted above, the second part of the conclusion, given in the document, calls for its continued use. There is various reason for the use of the Historical-critical method. For example, the Bible is historically conditioned. For the identification of the literal sense. Here PBC echoes *Divino Afflante*

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[166] Senior, "Interpreting the Scripture: The Church and the Modern Catholic Biblical Renewal," ebook.

[167] *IBC*, Conclusion.

Spiritu, which highlighted the literal sense as a primary goal of exegesis. Also, both actualisation and inculturation require its use.[168] The limitations of the historical-critical method are also noted, such as the limitations due to the presuppositions of the exegete. In addition to the narrow interpretation of the biblical text, the focus on the literal sense holds to only one meaning in classical practice.[169] Although *IBC,* due to advancements in philosophical hermeneutics, allows for a plurality of meaning, similar to the Pentecostal view. Again, similar to the view of Pentecostals, the historical-critical method is limited in its identification of the spiritual sense. Also, the meaning of the text is interpreted with the aid of the Holy Spirit. While I am not advocating that Pentecostals agree with the Catholic Church in all cases, there is a clear overlap, certainly an agreement that, despite its limitations, modern hermeneutics is beneficial for biblical interpretation.

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[168] Prior, *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis*, 249–250. Inculturation requires the translation of the text into modern languages, a process which also requires a concern for the historical conditioning of language. Ibid., 251.

[169] Prior, *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis*, 255.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

This thesis was founded based on perceived tension between the worlds of the Pentecostal academy and Pentecostal practice. The aim was to explore the nexus between the practice of a Pentecostal academy and Pentecostal ecclesial praxis within the Australian context. In addition, it was anticipated that the thesis would, in turn, highlight the benefit, if any, of formal biblical studies and its impact on Pentecostal hermeneutical processes. The study intends to make a simple contribution to the academic and ecclesial contexts by developing an informed understanding of Pentecostal hermeneutics and identity.

An original perception, that of tension between academy and practice, supported by direct observation, namely, evidence of a lack of critical reading skills utilised in preaching despite the prior acquisition of said skills, thus prompted the use of a survey. Accordingly, I entered the survey and the more comprehensive thesis project with an intuition that there is seemingly an incongruence between Pentecostal academics and ecclesial praxis, and the survey was an attempt to understand that and explain it.

I analysed the survey's findings in chapter two, testing my perception. The results of the survey data indeed alluded to the presence of tensions. However, more importantly, the analysis highlighted the real issue, the underlying issue, which is a matter of hermeneutics: between conviction and critique. What has emerged is a question of hermeneutics, a seeming tension or friction between two trajectories or two motivations. This pairing between conviction and critique is not wholly objective (that is, the participants straddle that conviction towards a traditional mode of interpretation and the academic penchant towards

critique). However, it is equally subjective since I am a member of the tradition I am writing about and someone who sits in both camps, so to speak. In this way, the survey questions became a provocation; they provided a hermeneutical question that gave rise to the requirement to engage with hermeneutics.

Accordingly, chapter three engaged with the development of hermeneutics and its key theorists through the lens of the hermeneutical issue to which the survey gave rise. Having reviewed the early development of hermeneutics as a discipline and the tendency in contemporary hermeneutics to acknowledge and embrace presuppositions and preunderstandings as unavoidable, it was shown that one, that multi-vocality is a necessary, moreover, desirable condition, and two, it is our very situatedness or context that the key to our approach to biblical interpretation is found. On this basis, it became necessary to situate Pentecostalism, specifically, the exact type under discussion in this thesis.

Chapter four was an overview of Pentecostalism, its development as a religious phenomenon, its key features, and the development of Australian Pentecostalism. The hermeneutical challenge was identified by canvasing the Australian Pentecostal context with an eye to presuppositions or pre-conceptions that have become embedded in biblical interpretation. It became evident that diversity has been a part of Pentecostalism from its inception until now, and tensions between Pentecostal academics and practice are shown to be present as an undercurrent throughout the movement's history. Furthermore, it was suggested that by understanding the development and history of Australian Pentecostalism, adherents could reflect on their situatedness, which, in turn, allows a greater appreciation for identity and a sense of belonging.

The presence of the tension mentioned above and the focus on the situatedness of Australian Pentecostalism led to an explanation for the anti-intellectual disposition that is often taken as being representative or defining of the movement. However, what has not, I suggest, been explored in sufficient detail elsewhere is the character of the academic engagement with the biblical text that has occurred since the inception of Pentecostalism. In order to further understand the character of such engagement, chapter five turned to the development of Pentecostal hermeneutics and the association with evangelical approaches and perspectives vis-à-vis critical biblical scholarship, particularly the Historical-Critical Method. Here I considered why interest in academic engagement with the Bible emerged and why it was supported. It is shown that the Historical-Critical Method became the dominant or favoured method within the Pentecostal tradition. Early Pentecostals' suspicion towards education and critical reflection on the Bible led to truth claims being asserted with little or no critical examination. This somewhat naïve approach that assumed meaning to be self-evident was replaced by a more rationalist approach adopted from Evangelicals with whom Pentecostals had aligned themselves.

A question raised as a result of this assessment is how Pentecostals understand the historical-critical method and, more importantly, how distant that understanding is from the original specification of the method itself. Furthermore, while embracing the evangelical approaches and perspectives concerning critical biblical scholarship may have helped Pentecostals establish academic credibility and acceptance, the partnership downplayed the significance of spiritual experience in the hermeneutical process. This situation emphasised the need for ongoing conversations regarding a distinct Pentecostal hermeneutic. This thesis thus sought to contribute to this discussion in chapter six by

considering a tradition that is completely "other", the Catholic tradition, and its approach to hermeneutical issues relating to the interpretation of the Bible. In exploring the documents that led to the Second Vatican Council and those that subsequently emerged, specifically, *Dei Verbum* and the *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, it is evident that there are several points of contact between the Catholic and Pentecostal traditions. In considering these documents, I am not proposing a "framework" within which interpretation can be controlled; on the contrary, I am merely suggesting that they provide insight into how an issue has been framed. This issue is one of hermeneutics, as identified via the survey. Furthermore, within a thesis focused on Pentecostalism, more specifically Pentecostal hermeneutics, the presence of a chapter given to Catholic interpretation of the biblical text may be confusing to some. However, as already stipulated, the purpose of that intellectual gaze was purely to search for insights to engage the question of hermeneutics.

Having explored the tensions between Pentecostal academics and practice, a further tension that I allude to is my situatedness as a researcher and my emic perspective as a Pentecostal, which causes me to wrestle with the same biases I am critiquing. I am exploring not only Pentecostal self-understanding; I am also exploring my self-understanding as a Pentecostal researcher, indeed, viewed from Ricœur's notion of moving from the first naiveté to the second naiveté. Another nod to Ricœur's methodology is that I arrived with a prejudgement or tension viewed as an either-or dichotomy. Through the critical phase, there was an "other", in this case, the survey data, external to the question. The data analysis interrupted my thinking and my prejudgement and caused new questions to be considered. So, the overall process is on two levels: first, for me as a Pentecostal, and second at the service of the ecclesial body.

In terms of applying the thesis, there is evidence for the need for a hermeneutical framework that holds between conviction and critique. Can an aid be produced to bridge that gap? As the flagship college of the ACC, is there value in AC developing a charter similar to the Catholic tradition? A distillation around Scripture and its application, one that, within the context of AC, can inform learning design. Is there the possibility of developing a proforma, one that is anchored in some principles that may inform teaching? Also, I suggest it could be a fruitful exercise to consider engaging other Christian traditions to explore how they have navigated the hermeneutical space.

There are a number of considerations for further study beyond this thesis. Regarding the survey questionnaire, a significant question that needs to be explored when interpreting the biblical text is: How important is establishing the genre when attempting to interpret a biblical text? Also, a more specific study is encouraged to discover the motivation for the academic study of the Bible within the ACC context. Having recognised that substantial existing documents within the Catholic tradition provide a hermeneutical framework or establish boundaries, a further question of concern is, why does the framework exist within the tradition? The response to this question does not suggest that the same is needed with the Pentecostal tradition. Finally, perhaps on a more fundamental level, is an exploration of the need for a distinct Pentecostal hermeneutic?

In summary, the interdisciplinary insights in this thesis stem from various methodological viewpoints. First was the need for data and data analysis, achieved via the survey questionnaire in order to test the initial intuition or observation, which identified the

hermeneutical problem. Second, the need to engage the discipline of hermeneutics, philosophically and regarding historical development. The discipline of history was further engaged to locate the current instance of Australian Pentecostalism and Pentecostal hermeneutics. Each interdisciplinary insight has contributed to the discussion and conclusion

Here is the singular finding of this thesis: an observation, identification and examination of a tension is not a signal to collapse or dissolve it. Instead, it is an invitation to explore it and assess its nature and function. Tension and discontinuity are not antithetical to the proper functioning of society and its systems. Instead, they are the lifeblood of the same. You never choose between poles; instead, you explore their relationships. As Bourdieu famously opined, the "stuff "of social reality lies in relations.

This thesis offers no definitive solution or sense of closure on an issue. It also encapsulates the fact that there is no endpoint that is not already present in the origin. The emergence of Pentecostalism itself points to an earlier event, and it is, as a tradition, an attempt to always recontextualise that event for the present and in anticipation of a future. As we await that future, we do not do so in ignorance of the past or avoidance of the present … "It is not up to you to finish the task, but you are not free to avoid it" Rabbi Tarfon – Pirkei Avot 2:16

Appendices

Appendix 1

Ethics Approval Certificate

ACU
AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

Australian Catholic University
Human Research Ethics Committee
Project Approval Certificate

Chief Investigator(s)/Supervisor(s):	Prof Dermot Nestor
Co-Investigator(s):	
Student Researcher(s):	Johnny Kumar
Project title:	Message Received and (mis)Understood?: An Analysis of Academic Discourse and its Relationship to Pentecostal Practice through Readings of the Old Testament
Project approval date:	17/05/2017
Project approval end date:	31/12/2017
Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Register Number:	2017-113E

This is to certify that the above application has been reviewed by the Australian Catholic University Human Research Ethics Committee (ACU HREC). The application has been approved for the period given above.

Continued approval of this research project is contingent upon the submission of an annual progress report which is due on/before each anniversary of the project approval. A final report is due upon completion of the project. A report proforma can be downloaded from the website (link below).

Researchers are responsible for ensuring that all conditions of approval are adhered to and that any modifications to the protocol, including changes to personnel, are approved prior to implementation. In addition, the ACU HREC must be notified of any reportable matters including, but not limited to, incidents, complaints and unexpected issues.

Researchers are also responsible for ensuring that they adhere to the requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research,* the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* and the University's *Research Code of Conduct.*

Any queries relating to this application should be directed to the Research Ethics and Integrity Office (Res.Ethics@acu.edu.au).

Kind regards,

Leanne Stirling
24/01/2022

Leanne Stirling
Research Ethics & Integrity Officer
On behalf of the ACU HREC Chair, Associate Professor Michael Baker

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Appendix 2

Question No.	No. of Responses	Question No.	No. of Responses	Question No.	No. of Responses	Question No.	No. of Responses
1	96	12	66	23	76	34	75
2	96	13	96	24	89	35	74
3	96	14	96	25	90	36	75
4	95	15	96	26	91	37	75
5	96	16	92	27	91	38	67
6	96	17	88	28	91	39	67
7	94	18	96	29	72	40	64
8	65	19	91	30	73	41	71
9	96	20	96	31	74	42	72
10	96	21	91	32	64	43	71
11	96	22	91	33	75		

Table 6. Number of Responses for Survey Questions from Respondents[170]

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[170] Based on the 96 Respondents who have completed BIB101 and BIB201.

Appendix 3

ACC Beliefs

We believe that the Bible is God's Word. It is accurate, authoritative and applicable to our everyday lives.

We believe in one eternal God who is the Creator of all things. He exists in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. He is totally loving and completely holy.

We believe that sin has separated each of us from God and His purpose for our lives.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, as both God and man, is the only One who can reconcile us to God. He lived a sinless and exemplary life, died on the cross in our place, and rose again to prove His victory and empower us for life.

We believe that in order to receive forgiveness and the 'new birth', we must repent of our sins, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and submit to His will for our lives.

We believe that in order to live the holy and fruitful lives that God intends for us, we need to be baptised in water and be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit enables us to use spiritual gifts, including speaking in tongues which is the initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. We believe that God has individually equipped us so that we can successfully achieve His purpose for our lives which is to worship God, fulfil our role in the Church and serve the community in which we live.

We believe that God wants to heal and transform us so that we can live healthy and prosperous lives in order to help others more effectively. We believe that our eternal destination of either Heaven or hell is determined by our response to the Lord Jesus Christ.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming back again as He promised.

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