Pentecostal ethics in light of Stanley Hauerwas's account of narrative, virtue, and the Church

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PENTECOSTAL ETHICS IN LIGHT OF STANLEY HAUERWAS'S ACCOUNT OF NARRATIVE, VIRTUE, AND THE CHURCH

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A thesis submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Institute for Religion and Critical Inquiry

Faculty of Theology and Philosophy

Australian Catholic University

Submitted 18th October 2021

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the ethics of pentecostalism in light of the theological ethics of Stanley Hauerwas. A coherent and consistent approach to pentecostal ethics is difficult to establish, given that the historical roots of the movement are eclectic and there appear to be competing moral priorities and methods of ethical reasoning. This problem is further described with reference to more recent church documents that outline various moral positions and the rationales behind them. Both the history of pentecostal morality and more contemporary ethical reflections demonstrate that pentecostal ethics appears to be in a state of confusion.

Nevertheless, a closer look at pentecostal ethics scholarship reveals that it is possible to identify some common emphases that consistently emerge. These characteristics are apparent in both the academic and ecclesial literature and include scriptural authority, holiness, narrative spirituality, church community, and eclectic and creative responses. While pentecostal ethics does not seem to follow a consistent or "mainstream" methodology, there is an intelligibility and self-understanding that arises when pentecostal ethics is considered on its own terms.

Given that the characteristics are not obviously systematised, and still indicate an ad hoc approach to morality, Stanley Hauerwas is employed as a dialogue partner, given that pentecostals have historically been open to diverse traditions, and Hauerwas himself is critical of the ethical traditions that pentecostalism appears to reject. Not only do Stanley Hauerwas's ethics of narrative, virtue, and the church resonate with the characteristics already identified in pentecostal ethics, his systematic approach demonstrates how these characteristics might function together.

The conclusion of this thesis is that a pentecostal approach to ethics must attend to five characteristics. These characteristics are Scriptural authority, holiness and virtue, separatist ecclesiology, narrative spirituality, and eclectic and contextual responses. These characteristics are validated in Stanley Hauerwas's theological ethics. Moreover, his systematic articulation of narrative, virtue, and the church clarifies how these characteristics can coexist and operate together to produce an authentic and intelligible approach to pentecostal ethics.

INTRODUCTION TO THESIS

0.1 Thesis Statement

The goal of this thesis is to develop a systematic framework for pentecostal ethics through an analysis of pentecostal history, contemporary pentecostal theological thought and a dialogue with the theological ethics of Stanley Hauerwas. The systematic framework incorporates five foundations: a basis in Scripture, an appeal to character, a narrative justification grounded in a community, a separatist ecclesiology, and a practical and flexible response consistent with an appropriate ecclesiology.

Given that pentecostalism[1] is a type of revivalist Christianity and a young movement relative to other traditions, systematic reflection on pentecostal ethics is still a developing area of scholarly endeavour. The academic scholarship contending with pentecostal ethics is limited to the last several decades and addresses a narrow selection of issues including war and peace, economic ethics, and social justice. In contrast, position statements produced by pentecostal denominations, such as the Australian Christian Churches (ACC), have tended to be more focused on issues of personal holiness and familial ethics. Only within the last decade have the ACC expanded into issues of social and community justice. Whether one considers the academic literature, or denominational position statements, there is no single consistent approach to substantiating a position. Consequently, defining pentecostal ethical methodology is a contested and evolving space.

The ACC have published papers on various ethical issues and defended their positions in diverse ways. The variety of approaches and choice of topics in these documents can give the impression that moral reflection in the pentecostal community is merely reactionary. That is, it appears pentecostal denominations are prepared to use whatever approach they deem necessary to justify a preconceived position on an ethical

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[1] In chapter 1 I explore the various understandings and definitions of "pentecostal"/"pentecostalism" and determine that using "small p" pentecostal/pentecostalism would be most appropriate for this thesis unless a particular denomination is being referenced, in which case I will use a "capital P". The exception to this convention will be in verbatim quotations, which will reflect the cited author's use or non-use of capitalisation.

issue in response to circumstances without a concern for the consistency and coherency of these approaches across time or between different ethical issues. By exploring the various approaches to pentecostal ethics – from academic reflection to more "popular" and "pastoral" publications – there appears to be a myriad of approaches to pentecostal ethics that give the impression of a chaotic and inconsistent methodology.

Nonetheless, several characteristics emerge in the pentecostal literature that may serve as criteria to frame what could validly claim to be *a pentecostal* approach to ethics. These characteristics include: a strong sense of scriptural authority, an emphasis on holiness, a separatist ecclesiology, a narrative spirituality, and an eclectic and creative approach to ethical decision-making. These characteristics are reflected, to a greater or lesser extent, in both the academic scholarship and ecclesial documentation.

Even though Stanley Hauerwas is not a classical systematic thinker in the theological sense, his ethics is organised in a systematic manner, that is, he proposes a "structured" approach to theological ethics arranged into three mutually informing elements—narrative, virtue, and ecclesiology.[2] His ethical vision is arranged in a way that helps to clarify the above criteria for what constitutes a valid approach to "pentecostal ethics", consistent with pentecostal theological and ecclesiological self-understanding. In this regard, Hauerwas's ethics demonstrates how the pentecostal characteristics might be organised in a systematic way.

A pentecostal interaction with the Hauerwas corpus garners legitimacy on three fronts. Firstly, pentecostalism, as a matter of history, integrated and adopted theological contributions external to its own tradition and scholarship. Secondly, Hauerwas's ethics agenda is driven by his dissatisfaction with "traditional and mainstream" approaches to theological ethics. Pentecostalism, as a revivalist movement, has historically also been dissatisfied with traditional mainline churches, and, though sporadically appealing to "mainstream" approaches, does not appear to do so consistently or consciously. And finally, Hauerwas's theological ethics includes several characteristics similar to those identified as important in pentecostal ethics. His approach to ethics includes a biblically

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[2] The use of the term "systematic" in this thesis will generally reflect this description, rather than refer to the discipline of systematic theology. In instances where the latter understanding is employed, the body of the text will make this usage clear.

grounded narrative theology, character formation and virtue, and a separatist ecclesiology.

Given this, not only does Hauerwas's work bring legitimacy to some of the proposed undergirding structure of pentecostal ethics, but it also demonstrates how the apparently disparate characteristics might co-exist in an organised and systematic way. The intelligibility demonstrated in Hauerwas's work illuminates a coherency in pentecostal ethics that, before now, was not immediately obvious.

The criteria developed through the interaction with Hauerwas will not remove all *apparent* inconsistency or incoherence, however. While demonstrating the internal consistency of pentecostal ethics, these criteria also provide a means to reflect theologically on why some diversity of positions and approaches can nonetheless be representative of a validly pentecostal approach to theological ethics. In other words, pentecostal ethics, by virtue of the nature of the theological and ecclesiological understandings that characterise it, can lead to both a variety of valid approaches and a legitimate diversity of positions. An authentic pentecostal ethic, therefore, need not produce the same outcome or ethical decision in every instance.

0.2 Thesis Question

How does the narrative theological ethics of theologian Stanley Hauerwas clarify the criteria and functionality for an approach to pentecostal ethics?

0.3 Thesis Claims

To answer this question, I present several claims that lead me to conclude that pentecostal ethics not only retains its own internal intelligibility evidenced by some common characteristics, but the systematic thought of Stanley Hauerwas can hold the seemingly disparate characteristics together in a form of theological architecture. These characteristics, then, are proposed as criteria that offer an opportunity to clarify the nature of a pentecostal ethic and provide a framework that pentecostals can authentically employ to develop their own theological ethics. The sum of the following claims indicates that there is such a thing as a "pentecostal ethic" and it can be clarified, and to some degree systematised, by integrating Hauerwas's theological ethics.

The first claim, that pentecostal ethics appears to lack consistency and coherency, involves an exposition of significant pentecostal ethics literature. Beginning with a review of pentecostal morality's heritage, I present the distinct ethical features and dynamics that emerge from its history and contribute towards the perception of divergent moral voices and priorities. This is followed by a comprehensive analysis of ecclesial statements on ethical issues authored by the Australian Christian Churches denomination (ACC). This material is assessed to exemplify the problems inherent in the pentecostal ethical landscape, particularly inconsistency, incoherency, and extemporaneity. I have chosen these statements by the ACC to limit the breadth of the thesis. The expanse and diversity of global pentecostalism renders a comprehensive overview of ecclesial literature too large to contain in this singular project, and by choosing the ACC, there are clear parameters around which ecclesial publications will be scrutinised and which ones will not. Additionally, my choice of the ACC is contextually appropriate because, firstly, this project is authored in an Australian context, and secondly, my unique proximity to this denomination has given me access to a discreet catalogue of ethical positions that were developed by the ACC to assist their ministers navigate ethical issues. Given both the need to limit the scope of this thesis and the social context, the selection of these specific publications for analysis is both practical and strategic.

The second claim is that despite the apparent inconsistency, pentecostal ethics harbours common characteristics and rationalities that can be understood and accepted on their own terms. These characteristics can be identified by noting any emphases or characteristics that consistently appear in pentecostal ethics literature. This requires that pentecostal ethics be reviewed not simply through what Lucretia Yaghjian describes as a "critical lens" but an evaluative lens—an appreciation for both the weaknesses and the strengths.[3] In this regard, the initial analysis in the first claim need not be dismissed, given it articulates an apparent problem, but rather it may be expanded to include the contributions of pentecostal theologians and practitioners to the theological ethics landscape. These potential "strengths" include elements such as internal consistency, common thematic emphases, and cultural and theological dispositions. Once identified,

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[3] Lucretia B. Yaghjian, *Writing Theology Well: A Rhetoric for Theological and Biblical Writers* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 72–73.

these characteristics demonstrate what may serve as a basis for framing pentecostal theological ethics moving forward despite the challenges that were already identified.

The third claim argues that an appropriate dialogue partner for pentecostal ethics is theologian Stanley Hauerwas. I will argue this on a general, a specific, and a theological basis. On the general basis, the pentecostal moral historiography attests to pentecostalism's integration of, and openness to, diverse voices and traditions in its theologising. On the specific basis, Hauerwas's work does not just defy the "rules of engagement" of "mainstream" Christian ethics, but intentionally rejects them. Indeed, one of his significant contributions to Christian ethics is the rejection of what he labels the "standard account". This will emerge through an engagement with his work where he is explicit regarding his criticisms.

Pentecostals and Hauerwas are also appropriate dialogue partners on a theological basis. Hauerwas's work does not just critique "mainstream" ethics but replaces it. An analysis of his work will demonstrate that, firstly, a scholarly approach to "circumventing the rules" exists, and secondly, his narrative theological ethics reflects the priorities and characteristics of pentecostal ethics sufficiently to sustain such a dialogue. To validate this claim, the credibility of his narrative theological ethics must firstly be established apart from pentecostalism, followed by a clear demonstration of the resonance between the two.

This claim therefore has three foundations: firstly, pentecostalism accepts dialogue partners; secondly, like pentecostals, Hauerwas is not wedded to following a set of imposed methodological rules; and thirdly, he defends this position philosophically and theologically, meaning that it may well have "sticking power" beyond a simple grievance-grounded alliance with the pentecostals. The characteristics that unite these dialogue partners are:

1. scriptural authority
2. holiness and virtue
3. separatist ecclesiology
4. narrative spirituality and theology
5. eclectic approaches to resolving ethical issues.

The fourth claim proposes that Hauerwas's narrative theological virtue ethics is a framework with the capacity to "hold together" the pentecostal characteristics that emerge in the second claim and are mirrored in the third. The capacity of Hauerwas's ethics to function in this way is established through the theological credibility of his pillars—narrative, virtue, and the church, and the ability for them to operate together in a mutually informing manner. This ensures that Hauerwas's ideas are not disparate and incoherent in and of themselves but are systematised in such a way that could be replicated, given pentecostal ethics reflects similar criteria.

The conclusion of this project is that an authentic pentecostal ethic has five necessary foundations: a basis in Scripture, an appeal to character, a narrative justification grounded in a community, a separatist ecclesiology, and a practical and flexible response consistent with an appropriate ecclesiology. These characteristics not only emerge in the pentecostal literature but are also reflected in the scholarship of Stanley Hauerwas, and moreover, his work demonstrates how these features might coexist in a systematic framework.

0.4 Methodology

Given the progression of these claims—pentecostal ethics appears inconsistent and does not follow pre-established rules of ethical engagement; there are identifiable characteristics in pentecostal ethics; Stanley Hauerwas is an appropriate dialogue partner given his rejection of "mainstream" Christian ethics methodology and his proposed alternative, which is both theologically rigorous and reflective of the pentecostal priorities; and Hauerwas demonstrates how they might work together—the methodology of the thesis will follow a critical theological study model using deductive argumentation as elucidated by Yaghjian.[4] Each claim will build upon its precursor to establish the next hypothesis. Within each claim various approaches of critique, analysis and evaluation will be employed, but overall the thesis will follow the macro structure of criticism, generosity, dialectic, and construction.

Beginning with the first claim, I will analyse the history of pentecostalism and the pentecostal ecclesial literature with a critical lens, viewing the movement and the

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[4] Ibid., 54, 70.

literature as an outsider might. This lens could be aptly described as a "hermeneutic of suspicion", referenced by Yaghjian but also explored in Margaret Miles's work and employed by David Kirchhoffer.[5] Yaghjian defines this approach as follows: "A hermeneutic of suspicion questions the theological tradition, does not accept it on its own terms, and provides its own norms for critique of the tradition".[6] Consequently the first claim will pursue what could be described as the negatives, weaknesses and problems inherent to pentecostal ethics. The norm used in the critique is the expectation that a theological tradition would have a recognisable, consistent, and coherent method to ethical decision-making, such that outcomes would not be contradictory.

Applying such an assumption has both methodological and theological rationales. Not only is the expectation of consistent and coherent methodology a product of modernity and scientific thinking, but it is also reflected in a vast corpus of ethics literature—both Christian and secular. For example, Peter Singer, atheist philosopher and ethicist, goes to great lengths to argue not just for his approach to ethics—preference utilitarianism—but demonstrates the consistency with which he applies it.[7] At the other end of the spectrum, Christian theologian and ethicist Norman Geisler also selects a particular methodology—graded absolutism—as the most appropriate Christian ethics methodology. Similar to Singer, Geisler deploys graded absolutism consistently within his own tradition, Evangelicalism.[8] It is no wonder, therefore, that what makes Christian ethics "systematic" is the expectation that a method with which to engage moral problems is identified and followed consistently. The hermeneutic of suspicion requires a norm for analysis; the expectation of consistency and coherence is an established norm in ethics as a philosophical and theological discipline and will be applied in this instance.

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[5] Ibid., 73; Margaret R. Miles, *Bodies in Society: Essays on Christianity in Contemporary Culture* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2008), 179–92; David G. Kirchhoffer, *Human Dignity in Contemporary Ethics* (Amherst, NY: Teneo, 2013), 26–31, 47–109. This methodology is widely employed in biblical and theological studies by scholars such as Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza among others. See Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza, *Sharing Her Word: Feminist Biblical Interpretation in Context* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), 95–100.

[6] Yaghjian, *Writing Theology Well*, 73.

[7] See Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics*, 3rd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 1–15.

[8] See Norman L. Geisler, *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 116–27.

Miles further describes the "hermeneutic of suspicion" in relation to a complementary (not alternative) methodology: a hermeneutic of generosity.[9] Her motivation for providing a corresponding methodology is specific to her experience and context: an ever expanding multicultural and diverse student body entering theological education. Nevertheless, her proposal has broader utility.[10] She desires to foster the kind of dialogue in the theological space that will be more inclusive of, and synergise with, the expanding pluralistic context. Miles defines pluralism as follows: "Pluralism is *not* different emphases within an agreed-upon system of ideas and values. Nor is it the *representation* of different life experiences and perspectives. It is different *people*, new people, in the sense that our historical antecedents were not here, participating in reality-defining theological discourse, people who are new to institutions of graduate theological education".[11]

Engaging only a hermeneutic of suspicion, Miles argues, only functions to reinforce pre-existing divisions of theological clientele: the insiders and outsiders.[12] Given this rationale, as well as the constructive aim of this thesis, it would be beneficial, if not essential, that the complementary analytical lens—a "hermeneutic of generosity"—also be employed. This approach, as described by Yaghjian, "walks with the theological tradition, accepts it on its own terms, but asks it to account for itself in terms of an accepted theological norm".[13] This will be the method applied to the second claim, the exploration of pentecostalism, particularly its ethics, to establish its own integrity and particularity.

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[9] Miles, *Bodies in Society*, 179.

[10] Her context is her own academic environment at Harvard University, but over time she has experienced the expanding pluralism in tertiary education. Ibid., 179–80.

[11] Ibid., 181. In her context this looked like traditional texts being subjected to new questions, the participation of "minorities" in education and the theological enterprise (a large enough number that they could not be ignored), and following this an increasing demand that the "assumptions, language and style" of theological work be examined. Ibid., 179–80.

[12] Miles describes "pluralism" in the theological academy as "not different emphases within an agreed-upon system of ideas and values. Nor is it the representation of different life experiences and perspectives. It is different people, new people [...] participating in reality-defining theological discourse, people who are new to institutions of graduate theological education." Ibid., 181.

[13] Yaghjian, *Writing Theology Well*, 73.

Kirchhoffer applies Miles's method in his own work addressing the problem of apparent divergent and inconsistent understandings of the concept of human dignity in contemporary ethics. He elaborates that "a hermeneutic of suspicion can be extremely valuable in questioning the assumptions and pointing out the problems that underlie a construct [; however,] a hermeneutic of suspicion is less helpful in constructing arguments in favour of a particular idea or construct".[14] Given this thesis intends to build a positive case for pentecostal ethics and to demonstrate its existence, in addition to a thorough critique of the problems and shortfalls, the pentecostal literature will need to be considered on its own terms with a presumption in favour of its own internal integrity. Considering that the overall goal of this project is construction, in Kirchhoffer's words, this "alternative hermeneutic […] can make sense of [these] findings in a constructive way".[15]

Miles proposes this dual approach to interpretation in such a way that demonstrates further relevance for this thesis—that the "hermeneutics of generosity and suspicion must be integrated to reconstruct the historical antecedents of people who, until recently, have been excluded from theological discourse".[16] Although she has her own context in mind, this thesis is dealing with, arguably, the voices of two theological outsiders: pentecostals and Stanley Hauerwas. Both pentecostals and Hauerwas locate themselves on the theological fringe. Historian Edith Blumhofer maintains that "an important ingredient in the Pentecostal psyche had been the cultivation of a sense of being alienated from the culture", including alienation from other Christian traditions.[17] Similarly, Hauerwas writes of his dissatisfaction with established schools of Christian ethics, particularly schools that pursue objectivity and abstraction, and insists on a radically different "Christian" theological paradigm that first and foremost "rightly envision[s] the world".[18] Where Hauerwas engages critically with the established schools, his dissatisfaction explicit, pentecostalism tends to remain silent, and by doing so, excludes itself from the dialogue. Whether the silence is motivated by a *laissez-faire*

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[14] Kirchhoffer, *Human Dignity*, 27.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Miles, *Bodies in Society*, 179.

[17] Edith L. Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God: A Chapter in the Story of American Pentecostalism*, vol. 2, *Since 1941* (Springfield, MO: Gospel, 1989), 13–14.

[18] Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics* (London: SCM, 1983), 15–24, 29.

disposition toward theological engagement, a conscious desire to be theologically or ecclesiologically sectarian, or an implicit dissatisfaction, like Hauerwas, pentecostalism exists on the theological margins. This positioning in and of itself attracts, and potentially magnifies, the criticisms, given the dialogue is also marginalised, making the dual hermeneutical approach even more necessary.

Given both Hauerwas's and pentecostalism's location on the theological and ethical landscape, to critique them only with reference to the rules and norms of theological schools that they both reject (explicitly or implicitly) will only go so far to advance the conversation. For example, while consistency and coherency are measures by which one could validly judge a theological and ethical worldview, these measures originate in the traditional schools and their own rules of engagement, which in terms of pentecostals and Hauerwas, are not necessarily accepted. Therefore, it is incumbent upon this thesis to consider both pentecostalism and Hauerwas on their own terms, just as much as on the terms of "establishment" theological schools. Therefore, Miles's interpretive method will be employed to address the first claim, which will be Part I ("A Hermeneutic of Suspicion") of the thesis, and the second claim, which will be Part II ("A Hermeneutic of Generosity") of the thesis. In analysing the pentecostal material in Part I from a critical "problem finding" perspective, a hermeneutic of generosity provides the vantage point for Part II, where space will be afforded "strength seeking" to "establish the discussion on the level of the ideas presented in the text[s]".[19]

It is important to recognise that a "generous" hermeneutic does not necessarily equate to an irresponsible one. There is nuance even in this hermeneutical vantage point. Like Kirchhoffer, while this thesis will opt for Miles's second iteration of a "generous" hermeneutic, this approach does not blindly accept the biases and agendas as an objective good—certainly this is one way to demonstrate a generous approach to work that one may not at first glance fully understand. Rather, probing questions of the texts in question assists in their illumination, such that their context, origins, purposes, and "rationality" might be understood and appreciated, and so that there might be a recognition that an observer's biases might be at play in any forthcoming textual and theological analysis.[20]

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[19] Miles, *Bodies in Society*, 184.

[20] Kirchhoffer, *Human Dignity*, 29.

Given this methodology in Parts I and II, it then becomes possible to demonstrate that Hauerwas is indeed an appropriate dialogue partner. This can only be established if there are clear areas of resonance between the two theological "outsiders". This is argued in Part III, "The Pentecostal-Hauerwasian Alliance". I will provide an apologetic for Hauerwas's inclusion on the basis that he too rejects the ethical methodologies of the "mainstream". In essence, he has critiqued the church (and Christianity, for that matter!) for its adoption of foreign and secular rationalities into its worldview, which has hijacked its ability to retain its identity and to maintain its distinctives—exactly what a "hermeneutic of generosity" endeavours to highlight. Part III will also consider Hauerwas's proposed "replacement" of the "mainstream". The theological ethical pillars that he suggests take the place of the flawed approaches he has repudiated will be evaluated considering their strengths and weaknesses. If Hauerwas's proposals are to be accepted, in a sense, he is reminding the church that they owe themselves a "hermeneutic of generosity", and the theological pillars of his work complement the characteristics that are established in Part II.

Part IV of this thesis, "Proposing a Pentecostal Approach to Ethics", will integrate the various elements of this thesis, bringing together the previous findings to demonstrate the synergy between the pentecostal characteristics identified in Part II and the pillars of Stanley Hauerwas's theological ethics in Part III. Given the resonance, the inclusion of Hauerwas does not simply authenticate the pentecostal sensibilities as being "valid moral priorities" but also reveals how they might practically function together. It is my contention that including a critical and generous approach to pentecostal ethics, as well as Hauerwas's systematic contributions, safeguards this thesis from leaving pentecostal contributions in interpretive chaos and vulnerable to further confusion, amid an expanding pluralistic and ethically complex context.[21] Furthermore, including Hauerwas demonstrates that a "reconstructive hermeneutic" is possible, and by

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[21] It is our "pluralistic context" that mandates such a methodology—to circumvent both the accidents of particularity and universal objectivity: "Objectivity, in contrast to objectivism—objectivity as doing our best to respect the integrity of the other with whom we converse, whether human being or text." Miles, *Bodies in Society*, 185.

authenticating the pentecostal characteristics, and demonstrating their functionality, novel pluralist realities can be met with equally innovative and constructive discussion.[22]

The dual hermeneutical tactics followed by a "reconstruction" and "reimagination" is exactly the approach that theologians like Miles promote. She contends that "We must work in new ways; we must create and invent and experiment and risk and respond in our work together; we must build a new kind of discussion that is neither chaotic—'anything goes'—nor one that constantly strains back to the old situation of rational 'transcendence' of differences".[23] It is in the realm of this "new" kind of discussion that this thesis seeks to operate, and though a myriad of challenges will undoubtedly emerge, a demystification and comprehension of the nature of pentecostal ethics will surely be a significant product. Furthermore, the sum of the thesis claims arguably resolve some of the tensions that gave rise to this thesis in the first place, and illuminate what may constitute an authentic and valid approach to pentecostal ethics.

0.5 Outline of Thesis

Part I of this thesis employs a "hermeneutic of suspicion", focusing on the perceived problems intrinsic to pentecostal ethics. This part includes chapters 1 and 2. After attending to some instrumental assumptions in the thesis, including defining some key terms, the opening chapter elucidates pentecostalism's competing moral historiographies. This is explored by examining the moral trends and tendencies of historical pentecostalism, including the tensions between the holiness heritage and evangelical influences, the various approaches to the Bible, pentecostalism's narrative spirituality, and differing conceptions of social issues and social justice. This is followed in

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[22] Kirchhoffer writes "an adequate hermeneutical approach cannot be purely 'destructive' but must also be 'reconstructive'." Kirchhoffer, *Human Dignity*, 29.

[23] Miles, *Bodies in Society*, 183. Consequentially the classroom no longer looked monolithic, where typically "In the classrooms, 'objective', rational theological arguments commanded consent, and most differing 'opinions' could be negotiated in the steady approach to Truth. Intractable differences of ideas or values were dismissed as perverse, and the few who held them quit the seminary to find other occupations than the ministry or other seminaries where they could find support and reinforcement for their beliefs […] Sometimes the questioner insisted on the reduction of the author's ideas to his allegiance to a class, an institution, or to a socially-constructed gender ideology". Ibid., 180.

chapter 2 by an analysis of a collection of ethical position papers published by a particular pentecostal denomination. Given the breadth of denominational pentecostalism and my own ecclesiological and geographical context, I explore an Australian Pentecostal denomination, the Australian Christian Churches (ACC) as a case study. This reveals how pentecostal ethics is articulated in a non-academic space, where the focus is ministerial and ecclesial practice. Chapter 2 also analyses the content of the statements that have been made available to me from 1992 all the way through to 2016.[24] This furthers the hermeneutic of suspicion by focusing on the weaknesses and challenges emerging in the pentecostal ecclesial space.

Part II of this thesis pursues a "hermeneutic of generosity". To that end, chapter 3 evaluates the work of pentecostal ethicists and other scholars who have contributed to pentecostal ethics. These contributions include James K. A. Smith's pentecostal philosophy, Nimi Wariboko's philosophical ethics, Murray Dempster's biblical and social ethics, Paul Alexander's pacifism, Daniela Augustine's theological and economic ethics, and Daniel Castelo's work on pentecostal ethics and spirituality. Their work establishes the various approaches to ethics and the moral issues addressed at an academic level in the pentecostal space. This is an important consideration because it will highlight the commonality (and disparity) between the ecclesial and academic writing. The "hermeneutic of generosity" seeks to uncover common characteristics, trends, and potential strengths characteristic of pentecostal approaches to ethics. The emphases emerging in this chapter reveal the characteristics that could be used to frame a possible pentecostal ethic. These include strong and frequent appeal to the authority of Scripture, a holiness orientation, separatist ecclesiology, narrative spirituality, and an eclectic and flexible theological method.

Part III establishes Stanley Hauerwas as an appropriate dialogue partner for pentecostalism and analyses his major contributions to theological ethics. Beginning with a review of the Hauerwas corpus in chapter 4, I demonstrate the pentecostal-Hauerwasian compatibility by firstly establishing that Hauerwas's rejection of traditional

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[24] The Executive Leadership of the ACC released this group of statements and granted me written permission to utilise them in this project. The papers they provided were the documents presently in use as well as any historical iterations that were on file.

ethics and his tendency to be "anti-establishment" mirrors the restorationist and separatist tendencies of pentecostalism. Particularly, Hauerwas is critical of "kingdom ethics", various approaches to biblical ethics, as well as natural law ethics, divine command, the function of rules and legislation, and situation ethics. Chapter 5 follows with the analysis of his alternative to "mainstream" approaches to Christian ethics to demonstrate the credibility, and internal, even systematic, coherency of his own work. His rejection of "mainstream" approaches is complemented with an endorsement of three central pillars of Christian ethics: narrative, virtue, and ecclesiology. This alternate methodology demonstrably resonates with the characteristics identified in chapter 3, strengthening the case that a Hauerwas-pentecostal dialogue is not only possible, but also beneficial.

Part IV proposes a pentecostal approach to ethics and includes chapter 6, which argues that Hauerwas's theological ethical methodology provides a "systematic" ethical vision that can clarify a valid approach to Pentecostal ethics. This vision sustains, rather than replaces, pentecostal theological and ecclesial self-understanding. This final chapter augments the findings of pentecostal characteristics in chapter 3 and Hauerwasian ethics in chapter 5 with a more direct synthesis of the pentecostal and Hauerwasian contributions, concluding that these characteristics not only exist and are valid, but can co-exist in a systematic, rather than chaotic, manner. I further conclude that for an ethic to be considered validly pentecostal, it must be scripturally grounded, orientated towards holiness, consider the narrative dynamics, and protect a separatist vision of the church, as well as be open to creative and diverse solutions.

PART I: A HERMENEUTIC OF SUSPICION

Part I of this thesis argues that pentecostal ethics lacks coherence and consistency and does so by employing a hermeneutic of suspicion. This critical lens will be applied to the moral history of pentecostalism and the competing priorities and influences of the movement in its early days in chapter 1, followed by a thorough analysis of the Australian Christian Churches' (ACC) ecclesial papers documenting their approaches to moral issues in chapter 2. The hermeneutic of suspicion indicates that pentecostal ethics is inconsistent in its approaches and that multifarious methodologies are not just historical, but presently accepted.

CHAPTER 1

THE DIVERGENT ETHICS OF HISTORICAL PENTECOSTALISM

1.1 Introduction: Incoherencies and Inconsistencies in Pentecostal Ethics

This thesis demonstrates that pentecostal ethics houses its own particular coherence that can be both explained, and to some degree, "systematised", with reference to Stanley Hauerwas's work in theological ethics. This proposition will emerge in light of several constituent claims, the first of which is explored in this chapter: the apparent lack of consistency and coherency in pentecostal ethics. As outlined in the methodology, this analysis applies a critical lens: a hermeneutic of suspicion. By inviting criticism from scholars, including those amicable toward pentecostalism, the weaknesses, problems, and inconsistencies in pentecostal ethics are identified to argue that pentecostal ethics, as it stands, lacks a coherent methodology.[1]

This chapter begins by framing this topic in the context of Christian ethics as a discipline and by defining some key terminology. This is followed by a summary of critical

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[1] Yaghjian defines this approach as follows: "A hermeneutic of suspicion questions the theological tradition, does not accept it on its own terms, and provides its own norms for critique of the tradition". Yaghjian, *Writing Theology Well*, 73. As noted earlier this is also explored in Margaret Miles's work and employed by David Kirchhoffer. Ibid.; Miles, *Bodies in Society*, 179–92; Kirchhoffer, *Human Dignity*, 26–31, 47–109.

challenges that are immediately obvious to some pentecostal scholars, including both theologians and historians. This review is not exhaustive but demonstrates that although pentecostals have a "moral consciousness", not just a spiritual one, given their short history, their moral consciousness has become difficult to "pin down". There are several complexities that have given rise to this reality. Firstly, pentecostalism has eclectic theological roots and influences. These include Methodism and evangelicalism. When juxtaposed, they demonstrate that pentecostalism has been impacted by two distinct moral narratives: holiness and experiential orientations, and biblicist evangelical priorities. Secondly, the influence of evangelicalism has impacted the way in which pentecostals have used the biblical text, particularly in their preaching and how they have moralised. And thirdly, and arguably a product of the first complexity, they have a confusing and convoluted relationship with social justice and therefore issues of public engagement and ethics. This brief analysis reveals a general dissatisfaction with pentecostal approaches to ethics, even among Pentecostal scholars. The scholars who have addressed some of these issues include, but are not limited to, Estrelda Alexander, Paul Alexander, Allan Anderson, Shane Clifton, Walter Hollenweger, Wolfgang Vondey, and Keith Warrington.[2]

1.1.1 The Quest for a Unified Christian Ethic

The apparent incoherence of pentecostal ethics is not a challenge unique to pentecostalism, but a reflection of the tensions and diversity existing on a macro level

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[2] Estrelda Alexander, "Presidential Address 2010: When Liberation Becomes Survival," *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 32, no. 3 (2010); Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter* (London: T&T Clark, 2008); Wolfgang Vondey, *Pentecostalism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012); Paul Nathan Alexander, "Speaking in the Tongues of Nonviolence: American Pentecostals, Pacifism, and Nationalism," *Brethren Life and Thought* 57, no. 1 (2012); Allan H. Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Shane Clifton, "Political Engagement and the 'Full Gospel,'" in *Globalization and the Mission of the Church* (Sydney: T&T Clark, 2009); Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997). Regarding Paul Alexander's work, online sources indicate that Alexander is going by the first name "April", but given the material included in this thesis was published under his former name, "Paul Nathan Alexander" will be maintained in the bibliographical information. https://bham.academia.edu/PAlexander/CurriculumVitae.

across the breadth of Christian ethics. There have been various attempts to address this, including in 2013, when the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches (WCC) published a document that sought to make sense of the ethical diversity across the global church by assessing the sources that individuals, church communities, and entire denominations use for moral deliberation.[3] According to the Faith and Order Commission, the sources of moral discernment within the faith community include the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Scripture, tradition, teaching authority, spirituality, and church culture. Additionally, sources of moral discernment supplementary to the faith community are listed, including reason, natural law, moral reasoning, the natural and human sciences, conscience, experience, civil law and human rights frameworks, and culture.[4] Additionally, the Faith and Order Commission sought to provide practical strategies to achieve ecumenical cooperation around theological ethics to minimise the perception of disunity among Christians.

To make sense of this ethical diversity, it becomes necessary not just to consider "which" sources of moral authority are employed, but "how" they are employed. According to the *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, ethics asks both structural (or methodological) questions and substantive (or content-specific) questions.[5] Although both sets of questions are interesting and helpful in exploring the diversity of the moral landscape, given this project is primarily interested in the methodological approaches taken by pentecostals, the focus will be on the former, with supplementary inclusion of the latter where appropriate. This necessarily includes consideration of both the sources of moral authority and how they are deployed in pentecostalism.

A further clarification of terminology is helpful moving forward, particularly regarding the way "ethics" is used in contrast to descriptors like "morality". While these words can sometimes be used interchangeably, there are those, such as Robert Gascoigne, who describe morals and morality in terms of the way one acts within the

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[3] World Council of Churches, *Moral Discernment in the Churches: A Study Document*, Faith and Order Paper No. 215 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2013).

[4] Ibid., 23–32.

[5] John Deigh, "Ethics," in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. Robert Audi (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 284.

world, or the way "we respond to the intrinsic value of the world around us".[6] Furthermore, the moral life "is a matter of practice, rather than theory".[7] In this example, morality is primarily concerned with actions and particular behaviours. He goes on to describe ethics as a "systematic and critical reflection on the moral life".[8] A synthesis of these understandings could be framed as follows: ethics is the systematic and deliberative discipline that gives rise to the conceptualisation of morality and lived moral experience. I will therefore employ the following definitions moving forward: ethics as a discipline is theoretical, and morality is concerned with practice.

In some respects, the lack of consistency in Christian ethics and morality, as identified by the WCC Faith and Order Commission's initiative, is a product of the diverse approaches within Christian ethics as an academic and pastoral discipline. These range from the biblical absolutist and deontological ethics of scholars such as Norman Geisler and Wayne Grudem, to the virtue ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre and Stanley Hauerwas.[9] Additionally, theological diversity within denominations contributes to the expansive variety of ethics and morality highlighted by the Faith and Order Commission. Pentecostalism presents a further challenge to endeavours seeking to unify Christian ethics ecumenically, given the apparent lack of internal coherence and subsequent difficulty identifying a particular theological or philosophical framework. Though pentecostalism is concerned about the moral life, the inconsistencies can lead some to conclude that there is no such thing as "systematic" pentecostal ethics.

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[6] Robert Gascoigne, *Freedom and Purpose: An Introduction to Christian Ethics* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2004), 4.

[7] Ibid., 6.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Geisler, *Christian Ethics*; Wayne Grudem, *Christian Ethics: An Introduction to Biblical Moral Reasoning* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018); Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to the 20th Century* (London: Routledge, 2003); Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013); Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*; Stanley Hauerwas, *Character and the Christian Life: A Study in Theological Ethics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975); Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981).

These apparent inconsistencies may arise for several reasons, not the least of which is the different meanings ascribed to the term "pentecostal". Two problems are evident. The first is that not all churches that identify as pentecostal in style belong to a particular Pentecostal denomination with its attendant doctrinal apparatus. The second is that in both kinds of churches—that is, denominational, and non-denominational—there are competing historiographical narratives that seek to characterise what "pentecostal" means. I address each of these issues in turn, both to clarify my own use of the term "pentecostal" in this thesis, and to draw out the implicit tensions that impact pentecostal approaches to morality and ethics.

1.1.2 "Pentecostal" and "pentecostal": A Source of Tension

Regarding the terminology used throughout academic literature, the exact meaning of the term "Pentecostal" is a subject of extensive debate. Allan Anderson admits that "It is not always easy to define what is meant by 'pentecostal', as the term refers to a wide variety of movements scattered throughout the world, ranging from the fundamentalist and white middle class 'mega-churches' to indigenous movements in the Third World".[10]

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[10] Allan H. Anderson, "Introduction: World Pentecostalism at a Crossroads," in *Pentecostals after a Century: Global Perspectives on a Moment in Transition*, ed. Allan H. Anderson and Walter J. Hollenweger (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 20. It is likely that Anderson is using the term "fundamentalist" descriptively here to recognise that pentecostal churches in the United States were labelled as such, particularly from the 1940s. Allan H. Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 250. This is not his own view, describing the careless categorising as "undesirable […] limit[ing] the freedom of ecumenical understanding". Pentecostals are "experience-orientated" and are quite unlike fundamentalists, who are "text-orientated". Ibid., 258. Russell Spittler demonstrates that the interchangeability was popularised by the media, which exacerbated the confusion. Russell P. Spittler, "Are Pentecostals and Charismatics Fundamentalists? A Review of American Uses of These Categories," in *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture*, ed. Karla Poewe (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 103. Spittler served as the President of the Society for Pentecostal Studies (SPS) in 1973.

Regarding the use of the term "fundamentalist"/"fundamentalism" in this thesis, I will be employing two different approaches. Firstly, as Anderson has done here, I will use the term generically and descriptively with a lower case "f". The term will be capitalised however when referring to a Fundamentalist organisation, church, or group. Additionally, capital "F" will be used when I quote an author who has capitalised the term in their work.

Despite this, even seasoned historians and commentators use the term "Pentecostal" without necessarily attending to denominational taxonomy and/or style and practice. Therefore, to sustain a coherent approach to this thesis, I now clarify the understanding of Pentecostalism that I advance in this project. James Smith's delineation of the terms "Pentecostal" and "pentecostal" will be of most utility. As Smith explains, many churches may be stylistically "pentecostal" (small p) or have theological common ground.[11] These may include charismatic churches, independent churches, as well as traditional denominations that have adopted a "pentecostal style" or practice.[12] Many of these churches, while they might look similar, do not necessarily belong to a major Pentecostal (capital P) denomination such as the Elim Church in the United Kingdom or the Assemblies of God (AG) in the United States.[13]

In Smith's work, he consistently uses "pentecostal(s)" as a "gathering" term, and not as a term used to draw denominational boundaries.[14] Other scholars also recognise the denominational and stylistic distinctions, including Anderson, who describes the broader pentecostal constituency as one unified, not denominationally or doctrinally, but by a common spiritual experience (or collection of experiences) known as "Spirit Baptism" and the practice of "spiritual gifts" or charismatic manifestations. Vondey suggests that these experiences are made intelligible by explaining them as: an extension of the "Spirit-filled life of Jesus" manifesting in the life of the believer, and furthermore a fulfilment of the promise of the Holy Spirit, poured out on the believers on the day of Pentecost as

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[11] James K. A. Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), xvii.

[12] Hollenweger identifies three groups that make up the global "pentecostal" community. These include Classic Pentecostals, the Charismatic renewal movement, and Pentecostal or Pentecostal-like independent churches. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 1. Anderson identifies four categories that fit within the broader grouping of "pentecostal" churches (as well as subcategories within those groups). The broader groups are Classical Pentecostals, Older Church Charismatics, Older Independent Churches, and Neo-pentecostal or Neo Charismatic Churches. For more detail on this taxonomy see Anderson, *Ends of the Earth*, 5–7.

[13] "Assemblies of God" is shortened to "AG" in this thesis. This is the preferred acronym used by the Assemblies of God in the United States. I will specify when referring to a different denomination with the same name.

[14] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, xvii.

recorded in the book of Acts.[15] The resultant "ecstatic experiences" gain further theological intelligibility when explained as "the meeting of the divine and the human, the immanent and the transcendent, the world and the kingdom of God".[16] These manifestations form the bedrock of pentecostal spirituality and included public prophecy, spontaneous song, miraculous healings, and speaking in tongues—the most important practice, which became central to the emerging movement and considered "the evidence" that a believer had been baptised in the spirit.[17] Speaking in tongues, or incomprehensible speech, in the mind of pentecostals, is a continuous recapitulation of the description of the outpouring of the Spirit in Acts 2, where the believers spoke in "other tongues". The connection between the biblical narrative of Acts 2 and the lived experience of the early pentecostals formed the rationale behind the early movement's spiritual practices.[18]

It is these experiences which have attracted labels such as "fanatical" as well as "revivalist" and "experiential".[19] This stretches back to the genesis of the movement, or as Anderson notes, "series of movements", the most frequently referenced event of which is the revival at Azusa Street, Los Angeles, in the United States.[20] While it is not

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[15] Vondey, *Pentecostalism*, 31.

[16] Ibid., 32.

[17] Ibid., 40.

[18] Roger G. Robins, *Pentecostalism in America* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010), 22–24.

[19] Vondey, *Pentecostalism*, 1. Some of the more extreme manifestations, such as uncontrollable laughter, collapsing, weeping, screaming, and animal noises, have come under criticism from both inside as well as outside the movement. Ibid., 38–44.

[20] Allan H. Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 4. While Azusa Street is referred to as the geographical origin of Pentecostalism, Mark Hutchinson, Allan Anderson, and others have argued that Western bias has neglected the many global revivals of a Pentecostal nature that demonstrate charismatic Christianity to be a polycentric global phenomenon not just in the present but also in its past. See, for example, Anderson, *Ends of the Earth*, 49–50; Allan H. Anderson and Edmond Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2005), 147–73; and Mark Hutchinson and John Wolffe, *A Short History of Global Evangelicalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 22. Furthermore Cornelius van der Laan recalls how an American missionary at the 75th anniversary of the Pentecostal assembly of Amsterdam, who had spoken of the American origins of Pentecostalism, was rebuked by Emmanuel

strictly true to say that the totality of global pentecostalism can be traced back to Azusa Street, Jacqueline Grey argues that "the importance of this event as a *symbol* or organizing principal [*sic*] for global Pentecostals cannot be denied".[21] The preaching of William J. Seymour, a student of Charles Fox Parham's teaching on Spirit Baptism, triggered the revival on Azusa Street when Seymour and others were "Baptised in the Spirit". The subsequent prayer meetings and worship services attracted an increasing number of parishioners and became symbolic of the global pentecostal revivals. Grey writes that "the revival at the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission became a centre for early Pentecostalism as it combined the white American holiness traditions with the expressive worship of the African-American community".[22]

Not only were church gatherings marked by unique distinctives, including the spiritual experiences noted above, but pentecostalism also flourished outside of "mainstream ecclesial establishments", indicative of another distinctive that marked the early expressions of the movement. As Frank Bartleman—eyewitness, missionary, and author—describes, "God had not chosen an established mission […] the Spirit was born again in a humble 'stable' outside ecclesiastical establishments".[23] Additionally, there were communal practices that marked this revival (among other pentecostal "like" revivals) such as the active participation of eclectic and diverse people groups. These included both men and women, as well as African Americans, Europeans, Hispanics and Asian Americans, "a glimpse of what is possible if we allow space for the Holy Spirit to change hearts and minds […] to demonstrate before the world the power of the gospel to

Schuurman, "the oldest Dutch Pentecostal pioneer still alive", who began his speech by stating that "Pentecost did not come from America, but from heaven". Cornelius van der Laan, *Sectarian Against His Will: Gerrit Roelof Polman and the Birth of Pentecostalism in the Netherlands* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1991), 1.

[21] Jacqueline Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 24.

[22] Ibid., 25.

[23] Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street: An Eyewitness Account to the Birth of the Pentecostal Revival* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2000), 39.

break down the artificial racial and ethnic walls that otherwise divide us".[24] This particular distinctive should not be understated, given theologian Walter Hollenweger's praise of "Pentecostalism's amazing capacity to incorporate oral and narrative structures from the American slave religion".[25] It was this characteristic that, according to Hollenweger, triggered pentecostalism's expansion in the third world: not a particular doctrine (tongues) or shared symbol (Azusa Street), "but because of its roots in the spirituality of nineteenth-century African American slave religion".[26]

It was both the "gathering" of diverse believers, and the shared experience of this resurgence of "spiritual gifts", as well as its rapid expansion, that led to the characterisation of pentecostalism as a type of restorationist Christianity.[27] At its best, this description applies to ecclesial contexts where something positive of the past, particularly the early church, is being restored, or alternatively, it could also represent a dismissal of "the universal church's history and theological tradition in its attempt to recapture the gifts, practices, and spiritual manifestations found in Acts".[28] This rejection

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[24] Cecil M. Robeck Jr., *The Azusa Street Mission and Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 14–15.

[25] Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, 3rd ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988), xxviii. Quoted in Lynne Price, *Theology Out of Place: A Theological Biography of Walter J. Hollenweger* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 10.

[26] Anderson summarised these features as "an oral liturgy, a narrative theology and witness, the maximum participation of the whole community in worship and service, the inclusion of visions and dreams into public worship, and an understanding of the relationship between the body and the mind manifested by healing through prayer". Walter J. Hollenweger, "After Twenty Years' Research on Pentecostalism," *International Review of Mission* 75, no. 297 (1986): 5–6. Cited in Anderson, "Introduction," 23.

[27] In this regard, "restorationist" is being used as an adjective and is not to be confused with the Restorationist Movement in the United States at the end of the eighteenth century and other expressions of non-conformist ecclesiologies. See Michael H. Montgomery, "Non-Conformist Ecclesiologies," in *The Routledge Companion to the Christian Church*, ed. Gerard Mannion and Lewis S. Mudge (New York: Routledge, 2007), 225.

[28] Christopher A. Stephenson, *Types of Pentecostal Theology: Method, System, Spirit* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 72. See also William K. Kay, *Pentecostalism: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 75–85.

of tradition was often accompanied by a shunning of denominationalism.[29] While not all "restorationist" movements are pentecostal, most, if not all, pentecostal movements are restorationist in character.

Given the various ways "Pentecostal" and "Pentecostalism" could be classified, the following delineation will be applied: in some cases, I use "Pentecostal" organisationally, to refer to a particular denomination or movement, such as the Australian Christian Churches (ACC). In these instances, I also note the name of the denomination in full and/or the appropriate acronym. In other cases, I use "pentecostal" and "pentecostalism" generically, to describe the "series of movements" and/or churches that adopt or reflect a pentecostal "style" of church ministry and practice. These churches include both those that belong to Pentecostal denominations, and those that share the "style" but have no denominational affiliation.[30] The only exceptions to this rule will be direct quotations from other writers who may have adopted a different rationale informing their capitalisation choices. Their original use of the term will be retained.

Given the focus of this thesis is on the challenges within pentecostal ethics, the following section further expands the history of pentecostalism. The historiographical narratives mentioned above are considered, but specifically from a moral and ethical vantage point, along with the subsidiary dimensions that emerge in the pentecostal literature. These will include the influence of the holiness movement and evangelicalism, as well as the impact of biblical literalism, pentecostalism's narrative proclivities, and its relationship with social justice.

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[29] Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 51.

[30] Given this, it is insufficient to establish the word "Pentecostalism" as purely denominational terminology. Highlighting a different dynamic as part of an ethical argument, Paul Alexander notes that "there is no capital 'P' Pentecostalism" in a universal sense. "What are advocated are particular visions of what particular traditions think (or feel) Pentecostalism should be. Failing to recognize one's own particularity among the diversity universalizes oneself and excludes alternatives." Paul Nathan Alexander, "Presidential Address 2013: Raced, Gendered, Faithed, and Sexed," *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 35 (2013): 342. Warrington contends that the term "Pentecostal" is necessarily multidenominational. Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 6–11.

1.2 Pentecostal Moral Historiography: Tracing the History of Pentecostal Ethics

There are many volumes dedicated to narrating the pentecostal story and argue for various historiographies that are considered most representative of the movement.[31] Emerging from this challenge is of course the question of a consistent and universal definition of pentecostalism.[32] I have partly neutralised this problem by establishing James Smith's understanding as a working definition for this thesis. This is not necessarily because it provides a universal consensus, but more so because it reflects the way "pentecostalism" is employed universally—with great "elasticity".[33] It also reflects, in my estimation, the eclectic, descriptive and inclusive expressions of pentecostalism found across the earth.

The following historiography, however, will not rehash the definitional issues, but accept the co-existence of diverse stories as the status quo and attempt to draw from them the moral dimensions of the pentecostal story. This in a large part will frame the rest of this thesis in the sense that distinct moral antecedents trigger diverse trajectories of moral thinking that can be expected to proliferate into eclectic and variable approaches to pentecostal ethics.

Drawing from the work of pentecostal historians and theologians, the moral impact of the holiness and evangelical pedigrees is critically analysed to illuminate the dynamics impacting pentecostal engagement with personal and social ethics. After a more detailed description of the holiness and evangelical influences, the relationship between pentecostalism and biblical literalism, and pentecostalism's affinity for narrative spirituality, is incorporated. I conclude this chapter with an analysis of the current relationship between social justice and pentecostalism, and the attendant challenges that

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[31] Historiography is "The study and writing of history. The recording and interpretation of past events […] the retelling of legends handed down through oral traditions." "Historiography," in *Oxford Reference*, https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095938853.

[32] For example, in Hollenweger's history of pentecostalism, he renders this question unanswerable in a concrete summary. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 327.

[33] For a discussion on how "pentecostal" and related terminology is employed in various contexts, see Spittler, "Are Pentecostals and Charismatics Fundamentalists?," 103–5.

arise from the two distinct moral histories arising from holiness and evangelicalism.[34]

1.2.1 Competing Moral Visions

While scholars such as Allan Anderson note similarities and trends in diverse pentecostal communities, including the global south, I will focus on the dominant moral visions that arise in North American pentecostalism in order to streamline the historiography.[35] The rationale behind this choice is historical and contextual, as well as pragmatic. Firstly, Jacqui Grey's contention that the Azusa Street revival, in America, represents an "organising principle", which, though not exhaustive, is symbolic of the movement as a whole. Secondly, this revival was birthed in the North American religious context and was instrumental in the expansion of global pentecostalism. Thirdly, the analysis in chapter 2 will focus on a western pentecostal manifestation, the Australian Christian Churches (ACC), which, while not identical to American Pentecostalism, is likely to be comparable.

Initially, I explore two moral histories that characterise pentecostalism, summarised by pentecostal ethicist Murray Dempster as follows:

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[34] Each of the two histories emphasises different components of what is referred to as "the Wesleyan Quadrilateral". The quadrilateral describes four authoritative sources used in the discipline of theology: Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience. The holiness tradition can tend to emphasise "Experience" and the evangelical tradition can tend to emphasise "Scripture". See Don Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral: Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience as a Model of Evangelical Theology* (Lexington, KY: Emeth, 2005). "Evangelicalism" can be understood in a variety of ways in theological discourse. Here, I am referring to "small e" evangelicalism. Jon Bonk describes this group as those individuals and communities who are not a part of institutional Evangelical (capital E) organisations but who share several of their values and priorities, such as evangelism, commitment to missionary work, and a conservative reading of the biblical text. These "cultural" evangelicals can be found across a broad range of established denominations, including Anglican, Baptist, and Pentecostal. Evangelical Missiological Society, *Between Past and Future: Evangelical Mission Entering the Twenty-first Century*, ed. Jonathan J. Bonk (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2003), 266. Given the similarities with the "pentecostal" nomenclature, I will follow a similar taxonomy for evangelicalism. Organisations, denominations, and examples of the formal movement will be capitalised, and more generic affiliations and adjectival uses will maintain a "small e". Quotations will maintain the respective writer's capitalisation (or non-capitalisation) convention.

[35] Cf. Anderson, *Ends of the Earth*, 7.

One vision views Pentecostalism historically as an offshoot of Fundamentalism and links its current identity and mission with the fortunes of a reinvigorated Evangelicalism. The other vision locates Pentecostalism historically with the pietistic and experiential forms of faith associated with the more liberal wing of Christianity. Within this latter vision, the current identity and mission of Pentecostalism is linked with the experiential recovery of its pietistic roots and its future service of Christian renewal within the many expressions of the Christian community.[36]

Evangelicalism has had a critical impact on the way that pentecostals used the Bible and consequently on their moral discourse. It is important to clarify that despite the influence of evangelicalism, pentecostals did not simply adopt an "evangelical ethic".[37] What Dempster suggests is that elements of evangelical morality and holiness morality took root in pentecostalism and gave rise to a hybrid that displayed similarities to both

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[36] Murray Dempster, "The Search for Pentecostal Identity," *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 15, no. 1 (1993): 2. See also William Faupel, "Whither Pentecostalism?," *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 15, no. 1 (1993): 9–27, at 26. As mentioned earlier, the use of the term "fundamentalism" can be quite loose. Anderson reminds us that "Pentecostalism cannot simply be equated with fundamentalism, as preachers constantly interplay Scripture with contemporary life and present the text as a reflection of common experience". Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 226.

[37] "Evangelical ethics" is also not straightforward to pin down. For example, evangelical ethicists adopt various approaches in their writing. For an overview that highlights the diverse ethnic and contextual expressions of evangelical ethics, see David P. Gushee and Isaac B. Sharp, eds., *Evangelical Ethics: A Reader* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2015). For more detailed theological articulations of evangelical ethics, see the Christocentric ethics in Donald G. Bloesch, *Freedom for Obedience: Evangelical Ethics in Contemporary Times* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002); Theonomous ethics in Stanley J. Grenz, *The Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997); and graded absolutism in Geisler, *Christian Ethics*. Among the evangelical approaches to ethics, a unifying emphasis is the centrality and authority of Scripture in directing the moral life. This is consistent with the "essential evangelical beliefs". Gushee and Sharp, *Evangelical Ethics*, xvi. According to evangelical historian George Marsden, two of the five fundamentals are "Scripture-centric": the "final authority of the Bible" and "the belief that Scripture records the real historical narrative of 'God's saving work'". George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 4–5.

traditions. Given the two distinct moral visions, pentecostals either favoured the pursuit of personal holiness, as per their holiness roots, or focused on biblical principles, consistent with their evangelical tendencies, or, in some cases, they displayed an eclectic mixture of the two. This eclectic reality gives historical context to the claim that pentecostal ethics lacks a consistent approach, an example of which is further explored through the case study of the ACC in chapter 2.

Both foci—personal holiness and biblical principles—tended to eclipse the pursuit of, or sensitivity towards social justice or public ethics, which supplies significant subject matter, insight, and practical strategies. The holiness focus on "personal transformation" and the evangelical focus on "biblical principles" can negate communal and social dynamics. This is evidenced by the "individualistic holiness codes" of the former, and the "doctrinal legalism" of the latter. This dual ecclesial vision may in part explain some of the apparent inconsistency within pentecostal ethics and I will therefore elaborate on both.

1.2.2 Pentecostals and Holiness

Pentecostal scholar Keith Warrington conceives of pentecostalism in light of the theological connection between Spirit Baptism and the holiness movement. Historically, the connection is established by the convergence of the Methodist "second blessing" doctrine, and pentecostal ecstatic experiences.[38] This is unsurprising, given "experience" as a theological category exists within Methodism, the forerunner of holiness Christianity. Methodist theologians such as Albert Knudson opted to use "the language of religious experience and faith instead of 'revelation'" to avoid association with doctrinal propositions such as those used by evangelicalism.[39] This is a fundamental difference between the two informing traditions, given Methodism's acceptance of experience's epistemological value, and evangelicalism's rejection of it in favour of a systematic and

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[38] Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 207. John Wesley, one of the founders of Methodism taught that there was a second blessing that could be experienced by Christian believers. Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 5–7. See also Kenneth Cracknell and Susan J. White, *An Introduction to World Methodism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 61.

[39] Sarah Heaner Lancaster, "Scripture and Revelation," in *Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies*, ed. William J. Abraham and James E. Kirby (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 495.

rationalist approach to theology more generally.

This is not to say that Methodists and evangelicals can be cleanly categorised into "people of the Spirit" and "people of the Word", respectively. The "experiential" dynamics of the former augments their theology of the Bible, rather than replaces it. For example, pentecostal historian Cecil Robeck describes the Spirit's dynamic role beyond the authorship and authentication of the biblical text, but in the reading experience itself—the necessity to "discern" what the Spirit might be saying through any given interaction with the biblical text.[40] This dimension Robeck describes is mirrored in the Methodist theology of the Bible which developed in such a way that accepted the basic tenets of Protestant doctrine of Scripture, but by "modifying its notion of inspiration [and infallibility]": "inspiration" means the Bible is "true" without "Insist[ing] that its truth depends on being without error of any sort";[41] and "infallible" means that the "Bible's infallibility lies in matters of religious truth, not in exact historical records or scientific matters".[42] The acceptance of the generic claims and functions of these doctrines (rather than focusing on the specificities and technical elements), supplemented by the more immediate concerns pertaining to what the Holy Spirit might be saying, paved the way for a pentecostal approach to Scripture that was not theologically or ideologically beholden to an established methodological system. This pentecostal orientation helped clarify the distinctions from other related movements, such as evangelicalism.

Jonathan Clark outlines the historical context in which Methodism, from which the holiness movement evolved, emerged in the United Kingdom during the 18th century and its global expansion shortly thereafter.[43] Key leaders and founders of the movement included John Wesley, his brother Charles Wesley, and George Whitefield, among

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[40] Cecil M. Robeck Jr., "Word, Spirit, and Discernment," in *Learning from Traditions*, ed. Myriam Wijlens and Vladimir Shmaliy (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2021), 138-140.

[41] Lancaster, "Scripture and Revelation," 493.

[42] Ibid.

[43] He explores its relationship to key contemporary institutions and trends including Anglicanism, politics, economics, and secularisation, among others. Jonathan C. D. Clark, "The Eighteenth-Century Context," in *Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies*, ed. William J. Abraham and James E. Kirby (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 3–29.

others.[44] Adjectives used to describe Methodism over the years included "mystical, perfectionist, experiential, penitential, social, pragmatic" and at various times, some of these descriptors have been emphasised over others.[45] While both Methodism and holiness Christianity are commonly associated with doctrines such as complete sanctification, Clark explains that the Methodist founders themselves were not monolithic in terms of their doctrinal convictions and practices.[46] The "pursuit" of holiness was already present in Methodist thinking and practice and as Kenneth Cracknell and Susan White describe, "In every generation, Methodists have echoed this deep concern for the inner life".[47] They also note that diverse and changing emphases produced "a spiritual tributary off the Methodist mainstream. The holiness movement, with its emphasis on perfectionism, is one example".[48] The holiness tributary, which emphasised "Complete Sanctification", believed that this "second blessing would actually make the sinner free from sin and thus entirely sanctified".[49]

From a pentecostal perspective, historian Vinson Synan describes the holiness movement (and subsequent revivals) as Methodism marked by a belief in complete sanctification (perfection) through a second work of grace.[50] Describing the broader relationship between Methodism and pentecostalism, Donald Dayton argues that

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[44] See Richard P. Heitzenrater, "John and Charles Wesley: Life, Ministry, and Legacy," in *T&T Clark Companion to Methodism*, ed. Charles Yrigoyen Jr. (New York: T&T Clark International, 2014), 3–19. Diverse accounts of Methodism emerged over time, constructing a multifaceted historiography including revivalism and the use of pre-existing church structures to mobilise church growth, the emergence of Methodism as an independent denomination, the perception that Methodism was a social reaction to urbanisation and industrialisation, and its self-identity as a movement of the working class and a vehicle for individual protest. These accounts did not erase each other but overlaid the preceding ones, sustaining the various historical emphases. Clark, "Eighteenth-Century Context," 10.

[45] Cracknell and White, *Introduction to World Methodism*, 141.

[46] Clark, "Eighteenth-Century Context," 10.

[47] Cracknell and White, *Introduction to World Methodism*, 30, 141.

[48] Ibid., 141. Demographically speaking, particularly in America, during the post-civil war era, economically and socially disaffected Methodists found the more marginal holiness churches a place they could call home. Ibid., 60–63.

[49] Ibid., 61.

[50] Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 63. Synan was also President of SPS in 1974.

"Pentecostalism cannot be understood apart from its deep roots in the Methodism experience" and moreover that "what we call the Holiness Movement [is] the middle term between Methodism and Pentecostalism".[51] Therefore to describe pentecostalism as simply a subset of, or derivative from, Methodism is too simplistic. Consequently, the three movements need to be understood in light of each other.

In terms of their social practices, American Holiness Churches were distinct from "established" Methodism, primarily on what some label as their "radical" ethics. Dayton argues that "Holiness churches were founded in struggles over social issues (abolitionism, the ministry to the poor in the style of the Salvation Army, the ministry of women, etc.) in which mainstream Methodism was the 'conservative' party".[52] Estrelda Alexander argues that these "radical" social positions held by the holiness movements formed the theological basis for the early pentecostal convictions on issues such as race relations.[53] According to Hollenweger, the American Holiness Movement's most notorious representatives, "the Oberlin Theologians", "stressed the necessity for holiness and sanctification [...] but they were also men and women of action. They saw their social and political pioneering as part of this religious experience".[54]

Returning to pentecostalism and its heritage from the holiness movement, though the two may have shared a "social justice sensitivity", it was not so much social ethics but personal holiness that characterised the early American pentecostals. Likely because pentecostals are known for their focus on ecstatic spirituality, Warrington argues that the

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[51] Donald W. Dayton, "Methodism and Pentecostalism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies*, ed. William J. Abraham and James E. Kirby (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 171, 78. (Dayton also served as the President of SPS in 1989.)

[52] Ibid., 180. This is not likely representative of all historical Methodism however, given that Manfred Marquardt describes the 1908 Social Creed adopted by the Methodist Episcopal Church which gained the denomination public and political recognition in the United States and the Social Ethics that emerged in the writing of John Wesley himself. Manfred Marquardt, "Social Ethics in the Methodist Tradition," in *T&T Clark Companion to Methodism*, ed. Charles Yrigoyen Jr. (New York: T&T Clark International, 2014), 304–5.

[53] Estrelda Alexander, "Recovering Black Theological Thought in the Writings of Early African-American Holiness-Pentecostal Leaders: Liberation Motifs in Early African-American Pentecostalism," in *A Liberating Spirit: Pentecostals and Social Action in North America*, ed. Michael Wilkinson and Steven M. Studebaker (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2010), 26–30. Estrelda Alexander also served as SPS President in 2010.

[54] Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 182–83.

greatest expression of pentecostal spirituality is a greater love of Jesus, closely followed by a holy and consecrated life.[55] While not devoting significant attention to the content of holiness or the constitution of a morally upright lifestyle, he does note that the holiness drive for consecration manifested in a form of sectarian living and avoiding all secular activities became paramount. This social isolation likely contributed to the diminishing of any remaining social conscience, as Anderson explains: "Personal piety can become a sop for a lack of social conscience".[56] Elements of personal piety included prohibitions on:

> smoking, alcohol, cinema (though to a much lesser degree television), dancing, gambling (even playing cards were often viewed as unacceptable), inappropriate sexual activity and bad language. This list could be broadened in some countries and eras to include issues as diverse as chewing gum, cosmetics, mixed bathing and involvement with politics.[57]

Lists such as these exemplify how the early pentecostals understood the mandate to "live a consecrated life". However, as Dayton notes, there was a growing recognition that the classic pentecostal texts within Scripture, such as the Lukan material, were more

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[55] Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 152. Dayton describes a similar interpretation of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism: "Wesley's position was an emphasis on a complex process of 'salvation' that looked forward to a goal, possibly achieved before death, of victory over intentional sin that manifested itself in fulfilment of the twofold love commandment of Jesus (towards God and neighbour)." Dayton, "Methodism and Pentecostalism," 173.

[56] Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 263.

[57] Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 209. Furthermore the historical American Penteostal pacifism was also considered a sectarian position and out of the mainstream. Murray Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, and Douglas Petersen, eds., *Called and Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 61. However, as Beaman describes, Pentecostals tended to rally around the pacifist position and found good company in their European counterparts. Jay Beaman, "The Extent of Early Pentecostal Pacifism," in *Pentecostals and Nonviolence*, ed. Paul Nathan Alexander (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012), 3–14. And those advocates of pacifism sought to justify it by demonstrating that this "was the normative positon on military service within the early church". Murray Dempster, "Crossing Borders: Arguments Used by Early American Pentecostals in Support of the Global Character of Pacifism," in P. Alexander, *Pentecostals and Nonviolence*, 126.

concerned with power than purity.[58] What is striking however is not that pentecostal social sensitivities transitioned quite rapidly from corporate to personal, but that the content of the holiness codes, as will be described, are reflected in the moral sensibilities of evangelicalism. The impact of evangelicalism on pentecostalism will now be explored to determine how evangelical ethics may have influenced pentecostal ethics.

1.2.3 Pentecostalism and Evangelicalism

This section explores the relationship between evangelicalism and pentecostalism. The term "evangelicalism" has broad descriptive utility. Ranging from denominational and organisational terminology to stylistic and adjectival conventions, its use has become so broad and multifarious, Donald Dayton has declared a "moratorium"[59] on the term. I have noted that the same conventions for "pentecostalism" will be followed for "evangelicalism" on the basis that I will make generic references to evangelical style and characteristics, as well as formal structures and organisations, such as the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE).[60]

Allan Anderson is one of several scholars who explore the dynamics between the established Pentecostal denominations and American Evangelicalism. The two are unusual allies given that evangelicals are generally suspicious of theologically experiential epistemologies, and by extension, much of the Methodist heritage mentioned above. Evangelical theologians, including Stanley Grenz, have criticised the Wesleyan theological model's inclusion of "experience" as an authoritative theological source, describing the problems arising from commandeering "experience" epistemologically. Rather, he concurs with Paul Tillich that, more accurately, experience is the medium of theological

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[58] Dayton, "Methodism and Pentecostalism," 183.

[59] Donald W. Dayton, "Some Doubts about the Usefulness of the Category 'Evangelical,'" in *The Variety of American Evangelicalism*, ed. Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnston (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 251.

[60] The NAE was founded in 1942 "under the leadership of Harold John Ockenga and others". The organisation was "open to a variety of evangelical traditions" including "pentecostal, holiness, Baptist, Mennonite, Friends, Methodist, and Reformed". George M. Marsden, "Fundamentalism and American Evangelicalism," in *The Variety of American Evangelicalism*, ed. Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnston (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennesee Press, 1991), 29.

reception. This is perhaps the most significant methodological divergence from pentecostals, who at their core are an experiential movement.[61] Grenz writes, in this regard, that "[Evangelicalism] has always been conscious of its roots as a movement for orthodoxy and orthopraxy",[62] emphasising the importance of doctrine and teaching, as opposed to ecstatic spiritual experiences.

Nevertheless, over time, pentecostalism in the United States of America has become more attentive to their own doctrinal positions, suggesting an evolution in the evangelical direction. For example, Anderson proposes that the development of moral codes and statements stemmed from the desire to be legitimised by the Evangelical establishment, and, similarly, William Kay argues that American pentecostals, particularly the Assemblies of God (AG), were motivated to collaborate with the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE).[63] This evolution was accompanied by stricter understandings of doctrinal positions, particularly doctrines of the Bible, including "biblical inerrancy", a belief held by many contemporary evangelical scholars that "the Bible is without error".[64] Warrington hypothesises that, even today, "the majority of Pentecostals would be

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[61] Stanley J. Grenz, *Revisioning Evangelical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 91. See also Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 42–46.

[62] Grenz, *Revisioning Evangelical Theology*, 105. Orthodoxy and orthopraxy are important in Pentecostalism not simply because, as Steven Land describes, Pentecostals have adopted this evangelical sensitivity, but more so because Christianity in its totality needs to be concerned with its theoretical and practical coherence. Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1993), 42. (Land was President of SPS in 2004.) This is one of several ways that Pentecostalism can look and feel comparable to American Evangelicalism.

[63] Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 250–51; William K. Kay, "Do Doctrinal Boundaries Protect Our Identity or Prevent Fellowship?," *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 12, no. 1 (1993): 41. See also Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 182–84. In her history of the Assemblies of God, Edith Blumhofer describes the evolution of the relationship between the AG and the National Association of Evangelicals. Blumhofer, *Assemblies of God*, 2:35–49.

[64] Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 19. See Norman L. Geisler and William C. Roach, *Defending Inerrancy: Affirming the Accuracy of Scripture for a New Generation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2012); John MacArthur, ed., *The Inerrant Word: Biblical, Historical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspectives* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016).

prepared to subscribe to the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy drawn up in 1978".[65] For example, Cecil Robeck describes how the Pentecostal World Fellowship (PWF) "understands the Bible as providing the primary resource and the ultimate standard by which all moral decisions are to be made and governed".[66] This is a matriculation of the logic inherent in the Chicago Statement into the ethical realm.

The "stricter" understandings of the Bible were accompanied by a developing moral and theological context in the United States. According to Cerillo and Dempster, evangelicalism was rejecting "the social gospel because it identified the Biblical kingdom of God with contemporary social progress and endorsed nonredemptive strategies of change based on naturalistic assumptions".[67] In alternative terms, likely resonant with pentecostals, the undergirding assumptions were too secular and lacked a sufficient spirituality.[68] It is possible, therefore, that social priorities characteristic in pentecostal circles may have been compromised in order to further the pentecostal-evangelical collaboration. If this influence is as direct as Anderson and Warrington suggest, then it is possible that pentecostals abandoned some of their distinctive social and ethical concerns for pragmatic reasons rather than theological ones. Anderson proposes a correlation by noting that pentecostalism's growing reputational sensitivity was accompanied by a

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[65] Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 183. For a transcription of the full statement see James I. Packer, *God Has Spoken: Revelation and the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994), 134–50. See also Grey, *Three's a Crowd*, 50.

[66] Robeck Jr., "Word, Spirit, and Discernment," 137. Robeck describes the Pentecostal World Fellowship (PWF) as an informal consortium of over 60 pentecostal denominations, with as many as 250 million individual pentecostals. https://www.pwfellowship.org/about-us.

[67] Augustus Cerillo Jr. and Murray W. Dempster, "Carl F. H. Henry's Early Apologetic for an Evangelical Social Ethic, 1942–1956," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 34, no. 3 (1991): 369. See also Carl F. H. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 28–34.

[68] Carl Henry, reflecting on evangelical ethics, writes that "the spearhead of the current attack on moral evils is not directed … by evangelical forces. Rather, the non-evangelical humanistic movements are heading up the agitation for a new and better world". Carl F. H. Henry, "The Evangelical 'Formula of Protest' and 'The Dawn of a New Reformation,'" in *Evangelical Ethics: A Reader*, ed. David P. Gushee and Isaac B. Sharp (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1947), 1.

decline in commitment to social issues such as "pacifism, social concern and women's ministry".[69]

Although there were some areas of agreement and resonance between evangelicalism and pentecostalism, including ministry priorities, preaching styles, and a "high view" of the biblical text, their relationship became caught in the crossfire generated by the Fundamentalist movement's hostility towards pentecostals.[70] Where "fundamentalist" and "fundamentalism" is employed as an adjective, sometimes in a colloquial and confusing way, Fundamentalism as a more formal movement emerged prior to World War I and should not be conflated with the evangelicals and pentecostals.[71]

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[69] Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 251. Pipkin also describes how many of the American Pentecostal denominations (as well as non-Pentecostals) wavered in their pacifist commitment during World War II, reflecting the prevailing views of the population at large during this time in history. Brian K. Pipkin, "The Foursquare Church and Pacifism," in P. Alexander, *Pentecostals and Nonviolence*, 79. See also Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 19. Dayton, exploring the relationship between Methodism, holiness, and Pentecostalism, notes that the neglect of the holiness movement in both Methodist and Evangelical historiography is "not yet well understood", especially the impact that these movements may or may not have had with regard to social justice dynamics. Dayton, "Methodism and Pentecostalism," 180.

[70] Wacker lists pejoratives directed toward early pentecostals, particularly the focus on speaking in tongues, in America by emerging fundamentalist groups: "craze, heresy, and sorcery". Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 44. (Wacker was President of SPS in 1997.) George Marsden details a history of Fundamentalism and American Evangelicalism, and describes some of the criteria used to distinguish fundamentalism as outlined by significant fundamentalist leaders. Marsden, "Fundamentalism and American Evangelicalism," 22–24. For example, George W. Dollar hints a doctrinal orientation, writing that "historic fundamentalism is the literal exposition of all the affirmations and attitudes of the Bible and the militant exposure of all non-Biblical affirmations and attitudes". George W. Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University, 1973), 355. Russell Spittler also classifies fundamentalists as loyalists to a particular collection of teachings, *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*, which arose in the 1910s. Spittler, "Are Pentecostals and Charismatics Fundamentalists?," 104. See also Reuben A. Torrey, ed., *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth* (Harrington, DE: Delmarva, 1910–15).

[71] Clarifying the history, Hollenweger writes that "pentecostalism preceded Fundamentalism. Pentecostalism arose at the turn of the century. Fundamentalism appeared just before the First World War". Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 190. As Russell Spittler describes it, it became popular to truncate terminology such as "evangelical, fundamentalist, charismatic, and Pentecostal" to the detriment of a

Whereas the evangelicals tended to be ecumenically generous, evidenced by the NAE's diverse coalition inclusive of pentecostal groups, the Fundamentalist equivalent organisation, the American Council of Christian Churches (ACCC), was strictly separatist and applied various theological and ideological litmus tests to eschew contamination from the "liberalising" mainline churches.[72]

Before the formal establishment of either coalition, the NAE or the ACCC, the Fundamentalists specifically targeted pentecostals in 1928 and adopted the following resolution at their annual conference:

> Be it resolved, that this convention go on record as unreservedly opposed to Modern Pentecostalism, including the speaking in unknown tongues, and the fanatical healing known as general healing in the atonement, and the perpetuation of the miraculous sign-healing of Jesus and his apostles, wherein they claim the only reason the church cannot perform these miracles is because of unbelief.[73]

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more accurate and formal understanding. Spittler, "Are Pentecostals and Charismatics Fundamentalists?," 103.

[72] The American Council of Christian Churches (ACCC) was established by Carl McIntire in 1941 in opposition to the liberalisation of American Christianity and to the National Council of Churches, a socially conscious and ecumenical consortium in the USA. "The ACCC was formed to be a voice of Biblical Christianity and to encourage and strengthen believers in their stand for the Truth. Churches, organisations, and individuals wanted an organisation that was separate from all trends and tenets of liberal (apostate) theology. No church or individual can be a part of the ACCC and at the same time be connected in any way with the National Council of Churches (NCC) with its liberal theology, ecumenical apostasy, and leftist socio-political agenda. Neither can one be a part of the ACCC and be associated with the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), which is noted for its compromise, confusion, and inclusion of Charismatics." American Council of Christian Churches, "The American Council of Christian Churches," n.d., accessed August 9, 2021, https://accc4truth.org/about-2/essential-characteristics/. See also "National Council of Churches," n.d., accessed August 9, 2021, http://nationalcouncilofchurches.us/.

[73] World's Christian Fundamentalist Association, "Report of the Tenth Annual Convention of the World's Christian Fundamentalist Association" (Chicago, May 13–20, 1928), 9. Quoted in Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 191.

Given this adversarial reality, there is a sense in which Dempster's claim that pentecostalism is an "offshoot of fundamentalism" is a tad simplistic, although it is accurate to describe some of the beliefs of pentecostals as "fundamentalist".[74] Hollenweger writes that both fundamentalism and pentecostalism were reactions to the "state of religion at the close of the nineteenth century. Fundamentalism is an intellectual reaction […] Pentecostalism on the other hand profoundly distrusted the intellectual enterprise".[75] In this regard, Evangelicalism, specifically the NAE, was caught in the middle, being more open to a variety of traditions, as opposed to the ACCC, which commanded stringent separatism. The acrimony between the Fundamentalists and pentecostals climaxed in the 1940s. Considering tongues an apostate practice, Carl McIntire proposed a merger with the NAE if they capitulated to some of his requests, including expelling the "tongues group".[76] The Fundamentalist-Evangelical merger never happened and the pentecostals remained in relationship with the NAE.[77]

The emerging alignment had both ethical and theological implications, including shifts in some of the AG's ethical positions. For example, the AG's historically pacifist position morphed to the mainstream Evangelical position, which supported World War II and found conscientious objectors an embarrassment.[78] Paul Alexander documents

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[74] Dempster, "Search for Pentecostal Identity," 2. As Spittler writes: "While North American Pentecostals are fundamentalistic in beliefs, mores and biblical style, they are and have always been clearly distinguishable from the classical fundamentalists who formed organizations for theological Protest". Spittler, "Are Pentecostals and Charismatics Fundamentalists?," 113.

[75] Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 190. See also Spittler, "Are Pentecostals and Charismatics Fundamentalists?," 106–8. Former President (1992) of SPS, William Faupel, also conceded that pentecostalism and Fundamentalism were incorrectly assumed to be different reactions to the same problem: liberalism. Faupel, "Whither Pentecostalism?," 21. The early pentecostals would not have had a conception of "liberalism"; rather, as Hollenweger writes, pentecostals took issue with the church's lifelessness, rather than its liberalism. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 190.

[76] Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 193.

[77] The relationship between the AG and NAE was formalised in 1943. Blumhofer, *Assemblies of God*, 2:32.

[78] Paul Nathan Alexander, *Peace to War: Shifting Allegiances in the Assemblies of God* (Telford, PA: Cascadia, 2009), 195–96. Cerillo indicates that this may have been one of several compromises that were made by the Pentecostals to "guarantee acceptance" by the NAE. Augustus Cerillo Jr., "Moving Up: Some Consequences of the New A/G Social Status," *Agora* 1 (Winter 1978): 11.

specifically how pacifism, a key ethical distinctive once characteristic of the pentecostal tradition, was replaced with a more militaristic evangelical position.[79] Brian Pipkin similarly explains how Aimee Semple McPherson, leader of the Foursquare Church, "abandoned her attraction to the pacifist appeal, opting for a more moderate and mainstream brand of Pentecostalism. In contrast to first-generation Pentecostals and their insistence on conscientious objection to war, she lead [*sic*] the way for a new generation of Pentecostals—one that was accommodated to Christian America and conservative evangelicalism".[80] Beaman credits the specific decline in Pentecostal commitment to pacifism to four broader sociological elements: upward social and economic mobility, World War II, the AG's alliance with the NAE, and the institutionalisation of the chaplaincy. His proposal requires further exploration but may account for the more general shift in moral commitments away from social ethics not limited to pacifism.[81] This is one example where acceptance and inclusion seemed to be a guiding principle "on the ground" for some pentecostal denominations.

While the doctrine of biblical inerrancy may have functioned ecumenically as a theological bridge between pentecostals and evangelicals, this was not the full extent of

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[79] Paul Alexander, who grew up in the Pentecostal Church, was shocked upon learning that the "majority of early Pentecostals were pacifists—committed to nonviolence". Paul Nathan Alexander, "What Can Pentecostals and Charismatics Do for Peace?," in *Christ at the Checkpoint: Theology in the Service of Justice and Peace*, ed. Paul Alexander (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2012), 62. It is also possible that support for the pacifist position in Pentecostal churches declined as in some contexts support was not institutionalised and conscientious objection was replaced with support for the individual decisions to concur (or object), informed by conscience. An example of both the shift from support for pacifism to tolerance of pacifism, and the declining support of Pentecostalism for pacifism in general, is the Foursquare movement, which, in never developing a denominational position, followed the cultural sentiment. Pipkin, "Foursquare Church and Pacifism," 66–67. This shifted in 1967, during the Vietnam War, when the argument for "conscientious objection" with an emphasis on pacifism morphed into an argument for "conscientious participation or non-participation" with an emphasis on patriotic loyalty. P. Alexander, *Peace to War*, 31. In this way, the authority of the individual conscience by default became the pro-combatant position. Ibid., 132. Furthermore, the new resolution articulated a position not substantiated by Scripture but argued pragmatically and philosophically. Ibid., 237.

[80] Pipkin, "Foursquare Church and Pacifism," 107.

[81] Jay Beaman, *Pentecostal Pacifism: The Origin, Development, and Rejection of Pacific Belief among the Pentecostals* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2009), 142. See also P. Alexander, *Peace to War*, 314.

its impact. The adoption of its principles and "spirit", as well as the influence of the Word of Faith movement, affected the way in which the Bible was deployed in pentecostalism, including its use as a moral text.[82] Given that Bible reading was (and still is) central to pentecostal theological reflection, moral reflection was propelled on a literalist trajectory, primarily paving the way for an absolutist ethical methodology.[83] I now briefly summarise this context and its particularities.

1.2.4 Pentecostalism and Biblical Literalism

While the Bible is valued as a source of ethics across the ecumenical spectrum, its moral function is employed in diverse ways. The WCC Faith and Order Commission, for example, states that although "Holy Scripture is an essential source for moral discernment in all the churches [...] there are different ways of using Scripture".[84] Moreover, biblical absolutism is not an approach exclusive to pentecostal or evangelical groups, nor is it the only methodology by which to integrate the Scriptures into ethical discourse. In reference to Catholic-pentecostal dialogue, Jonathan Martin argues that "The chief task for today's moral theologians is to reopen the lines of communication between Christian ethics and the Word of God".[85]

Keith Warrington and Allan Anderson have raised several concerns with biblical absolutism as a form of ethics methodology, notwithstanding the influence of evangelicalism on pentecostal Bible reading. Warrington describes the early pentecostal relationship to the Bible, noting terminology conventions such as "God's Word" and "Bible Colleges", the tendency of pentecostals to treat the Bible in a "literalistic manner", and a "popular form of biblical theology".[86] These conventions highlight the early significance of the Bible without a clear commitment to a particular systematic approach to the Scriptures. The adoption of evangelical doctrines of biblical authority crystalised these

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[82] Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 221; Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 194. See also Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 19.

[83] Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 182.

[84] World Council of Churches, *Moral Discernment*, 25.

[85] Jonathan A. Martin, "Spirit, Apocalypse and Ethics: Reading Catholic Moral Theology as a Pentecostal," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, no. 17 (2008): 242.

[86] Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 180–86.

nascent sensibilities, causing some pentecostal ethics to assume a more deontological character.[87] The coincidental departure from implicit holiness priorities also signalled the production of explicit moral propositions of extant pentecostal morality, such that positions opposing abortion, sex before marriage, gambling, and tattoos, etc. were grounded in divine commands rather than experiential sanctification or a desire for holiness.[88] Warrington's own position is that "holiness codes" such as these were a wholesale adoption of evangelical morality and lacked a more considered appropriation.[89] Ellington also concurs that institutional motivation superseded theological motivation and that the changes occurred for collaborative and ecumenical purposes rather than doctrinal ones.[90] In conclusion, a vast number of pentecostal historians both recognise the influence of evangelicalism and concur that the evolution was motivated, to a large degree, by pragmatism.

Regarding biblical literalism and the doctrine of biblical inerrancy more generally, it is probably accurate to suggest that pentecostalism adopted the "spirit" of inerrancy, rather than its specific doctrinal stipulations. For example, Warrington writes that:

> many would be unaware that the [the Chicago Statement] refers to the text as originally given being inerrant and that those original texts are no longer extant. The tradition of textual criticism and the copious number of variants of the biblical

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[87] Rule-based approaches, that is, biblical deontology—"this particular act is wrong because the Bible says so"—etc. Geisler defines deontological systems as "Duty-centered ethics, stressing obedience to rules". Geisler, *Christian Ethics*, 408. Rae clarifies "deontological systems" as methods focused on a binding duty to follow rules or principles. He contrasts deontological systems with "teleological systems", ethics that reject the idea that actions are inherently right or wrong and instead are directed by particular goals or consequences; and "relativism", fluid approaches to ethics that adopt a generous approach to culture, preferences, and context. Rae, *Moral Choices*, 22.

[88] In these issues there was no room for diversity based on personal conscience (unlike capital punishment and military service). P. Alexander, *Peace to War*, 275.

[89] This could be further explored by recognising that holiness by negation affirms the type of dualism that James Smith has rejected, as fundamentally it "denigrates the body as the source of all evil". Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 61.

[90] Scott A. Ellington, "Pentecostalism and the Authority of Scripture," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, no. 9 (1996): 19.

text, which most Pentecostals are blissfully unaware of, make it difficult to determine which of the copies are the authentic links in the chain back to the first text. Nevertheless, because of the inspired nature of the Bible, most Pentecostals simply assume that the received texts must be true.[91]

The challenge is further complicated by the subscription to inerrancy by Christian fundamentalists—a term "fraught with peril", according to Gerald King.[92] Pentecostal scholar Cheryl Bridges-Johns attempts to nuance between a "fundamentalist" approach to the Bible and the pentecostal prioritisation of the biblical text. She writes that, for pentecostals, "Because there is a co-joining of God's presence with God's Word, to encounter the Scriptures is to encounter God".[93] Furthermore, the Bible is a "template for reading the world […] it is in the light of Scripture that the patterns of life are recognised".[94] Jacqueline Grey notes that scholars such as Bridges-Johns seek to remove

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[91] Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 183.

[92] King also describes the relationship between pentecostalism and fundamentalism, and attempts to illuminate a basic understanding of these terms and how they relate. Gerald King, *Disfellowshiped: Pentecostal Responses to Fundamentalism in the United States, 1906–1943* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 9. Fundamentalism is a term that could refer to, in the context of American Evangelicalism, the "militantly conservative wing of the evangelical coalition". Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 3. But also more generally, with reference to American Christianity, fundamentalism "included militant conservatives among Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Disciples, Episcopalians, holiness groups, pentecostals, and many other denominations". Ibid. Furthermore, regarding Christianity more broadly, David Beale describes fundamentalists as Christians who adopt an "unqualified acceptance of and obedience to the Scriptures". David Beale, *In Pursuit of Purity: American Fundamentalism since 1850* (Greenville, SC: Unusual, 1986), 3. Beale identifies that whatever else "fundamentalist" may or may not refer to, there is certainly a connection with the "doctrine of inerrancy" from a theological perspective, and a zealous disposition in terms of church practice. Overall, King describes fundamentalism as a "complex movement […] a broad coalition of premillennialists and inerrantists of largely Reformed stock who sought to defend the historic faith from modernist incursion". King, *Disfellowshiped*, 11.

[93] Cheryl Bridges-Johns, "A Pentecostal Perspective," in *Pentecostal Movements as an Ecumenical Challenge*, ed. Jurgen Moltmann and Karl-Josef Kuschel (London: SCM, 1996), 47. Bridges-Johns served as the SPS President in 1993.

[94] Ibid. Quoted in Grey, *Three's a Crowd*, 50. (Jacqueline Grey also served as SPS President in 2017.)

"the Pentecostal understanding of the nature of Scripture from a uniquely doctrinal setting",[95] and incorporate their community-centric faith and practices.

While doctrinal positions, such as the Chicago Statement, provided language that pentecostals found comfortable and resonant with their own disposition toward the Scriptures, Grey notes that, firstly, this was "adopted" rather than "uniquely pentecostal" and, secondly, that it was "not necessarily reflective of their reading practice".[96] Practically speaking, when faced with apparent contradictions in the text, pentecostals, according to Warrington, would harmonise or spiritualise them, whereas evangelicals (who have articulated doctrinal positions on inerrancy) would seek to explain and rationalise them.[97]

In summary, both pentecostals and evangelicals (as well as fundamentalists) place a high value on the biblical text, but, when explored, reveal distinct motivations and priorities. Where an evangelical might prioritise a "systematic" understanding of the Bible (a prescriptive theology that informs how the text should be used and understood as authoritative), a pentecostal might accentuate the "experiential" and "narrative" power of the Bible (a descriptive theology that informs how the text should be received and experienced as authoritative). Pentecostals and evangelicals are often conflated because, firstly, American Pentecostalism did engage with the Evangelicals organisationally, and secondly, for the observer, there exists common language and shared practices that indicate the perceived similarities.

From the perspective of ethics, the unique challenges relevant to pentecostalism's relationship to the Bible can be summarised as follows. Firstly, the growing complexity of both society and the ethical issues therein are raising situations not addressed directly in Scripture, yet the pentecostal theological frame assumes scriptural answers. Furthermore, not only does the social moral landscape evolve over time, but churches,

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[95] Grey, *Three's a Crowd*, 50.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 68.

including pentecostal ones, also develop in their ethical positions and therefore how they deploy the Bible to aid these evolutions.[98]

Secondly, concerning preaching, Anderson describes the reinforcing of divine authority by the simple inclusion of phrases such as "the Bible says", amalgamated with anecdotal preaching and sometimes "no conscious effort to explain the Bible at all".[99] This is not to say that pentecostal preachers have not received theological training, but possibly for stylistic reasons the tools of interpretation are kept secret from pentecostal churchgoers.[100] This perhaps produces unintended consequences: pentecostals accept both what the preachers say, and simultaneously replicate what they perceive to be the method—an apparent crude form of literalism.

Thirdly and finally, in practice, these challenges can in some contexts produce a simplistic, black-and-white approach to ethics while simultaneously lacking a considered approach to addressing contradictions and prioritisation. Additionally, not only are preachers modelling how they think the Bible ought to be used, but also they are describing (with scriptural support) the moral and social standards for their congregations.[101] The pacifist position taken by a great many early pentecostals is an example of this. The rationality at work was as simple as obedience to the Ten Commandments, specifically, "thou shalt not kill".[102]

Preaching in pentecostal churches has two ethical impacts: the indirect training of congregations on the methodological use of Scripture, and the provision of content for ethical living essentially collapsing literalist method and holiness morality.

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[98] Walter J. Hollenweger, "Critical Issues for Pentecostals," in *Pentecostals after a Century: Global Perspectives on a Movement in Transition*, ed. Allan H. Anderson and Walter J. Hollenweger (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 183–85.

[99] Anderson, *Ends of the Earth*, 127.

[100] Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 323.

[101] Retaining the social norms of the group ensures that the community remains cohesive, at the risk of exclusion, and encourages the conformity of the members, although Warrington makes a clear case that: "Younger, mobile, independent, educated and affluent Pentecostals are less influenced by a desire to maintain the cohesion of social Christian groups by their behaviour unless it is demonstrably clear that to act and believe thus has a supported rationale". Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 209–13.

[102] Ibid., 207.

Notwithstanding the distinct ethical vantage points supplied by the holiness and evangelical traditions, holy conduct and biblical absolutes respectively, the former resonates somewhat with the virtue ethics tradition, emphasising moral dispositions, and the latter with the deontological tradition, emphasising moral prescriptions. Diverse moral outcomes can also be a product of these differing emphases. Given that preaching as an ecclesial practice, in and of itself, cannot reconcile the two methodological approaches to ethics, and that pentecostalism has diverse historical influences that include both holiness and evangelical traditions, the methodological challenges can be quite difficult to resolve.

Returning to the issue of biblical literalism, the homiletic context can provide absolutist interpretations but leaves pentecostals lacking a coherent rationale behind why some Scriptures carry more weight in the moral hierarchy over others. For example, though preachers can be quick to uphold a strict standard of sexual ethics based on biblical commands or inferences, there can be less emphasis on the implementation of food laws.[103] Moral prescriptions in Sunday sermons generally do not provide the knowledge base or framework needed for more robust ethical discourse, but only the opportunity to accept or reject them.

A simplistic biblical absolutism can often, in these circumstances, easily disenfranchise or even dispense with moral deliberation altogether. Where evangelicals have the systematic tools to be able to navigate these tensions coherently, the pentecostals lean on non-systematic approaches that are varied and diverse.[104] As mentioned above, Warrington, Grey, and Bridges-Johns suggest that the pentecostal approach to the Bible is not systematic as such, and some of the rationality behind doctrines such as the Chicago Statement may therefore remain unintegrated with their biblical theology.

In conclusion, pentecostals clearly have the capacity for moral reflection, whether

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[103] A case in point of this disparity arises in chapter 3's analysis of the ACC's literature, which includes various statements pertaining to sexual ethics and none regarding anything close to food laws.

[104] Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 222. Some of these tensions are navigated in evangelical scholarship, such as Geisler's graded absolutism and divine command ethics, Geisler, *Christian Ethics*, 97–127; and Grudem's writing addressing moral conflicts: Grudem, *Christian Ethics*, 187–208.

they are leaning on their Methodist roots and focused on personal holiness, or their evangelical roots, focused on biblical absolutes. What both these vantage points tend to produce, however, is a legalistic and individualistic, rather than a social or corporate, moral focus. The diverse interpretive approaches, from literalist in the early days to historical-critical, have been unable to establish a hermeneutical consensus among pentecostal churchgoers.[105] However, according to Cecil Robeck, "Pentecostal biblical scholars now embrace a more meaningful post-critical, narrative approach to the Bible". This has the advantage of fostering "a form of spirituality that values personal testimony or narrative, this approach takes seriously both the scholar and most members of the local congregation".[106] Given this reality, before I address how the holiness and evangelical dynamics impact pentecostal social ethics and approaches to social justice, I will briefly explore the narrative dynamics at work in pentecostal practice that have an educational, and possibly moral, impact on the pentecostal life—that is, their affinity with story and their narrative spirituality.[107]

1.2.5 Pentecostalism and Narrative

Biblical scholar Jacqueline Grey argues that the oral culture of early pentecostalism functioned epistemologically, and she describes some of the common historical practices in the pentecostal movement. This oral culture was strengthened by the "prolific use of testimonies, preaching and narratives", as well as by approaches to the biblical text that were "not only read but lived, spoken, prophesied and sung".[108] Walter Hollenweger, who

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[105] For example, Hollenweger identifies as a "narrative exegete", yet his commentators notice the warmth he exhibits towards methods inherited from elsewhere. Price summarises: "For Hollenweger historical-critical knowledge is not only a very positive contribution to understanding the diversity of present-day Christianity and plurality of interpretations, but also reveals a model of ongoing struggle to articulate faith in the context of life's realities". Price, *Theology Out of Place*, 47.

[106] Robeck Jr., "Word, Spirit, and Discernment," 141.

[107] Warrington highlights that those churches also encourage moral conformity through preaching and Jonathan Martin suggests this had an educational impact: "Early Pentecostals had little formal education so the authoritative instruction on moral life came not from moral philosophers but preachers". Martin, "Spirit, Apocalypse and Ethics," 247. See also Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 209.

[108] Grey, *Three's a Crowd*, 21.

supports narrative exegesis—"a new form of narrative Bible exegesis which is informed by critical scholarship"[109]—emphasises the narrative roots of pentecostalism and describes how oral theology operates:

> not through the book, but through the parable,
>
> not through the thesis, but through the testimony,
>
> not through dissertations, but through dances,
>
> not through concepts, but through banquets,
>
> not through a system of thinking, but through stories and songs,
>
> not through definitions, but through descriptions,
>
> not through arguments, but through transformed lives.[110]

Similarly, Paul Alexander describes how "Pentecostals love to tell stories [...] Pentecostalism is a movement that is drawn forward by stories, it is a story-motivated and story-formed faith".[111] This indicates that while a narrative epistemology might not be explicit, practices indicating its existence are nevertheless present. It is also possible that an explicit appeal to narrative knowledge may not be welcomed in some pentecostal contexts, considering the equally strong appeals to biblical truth. But as historian and theologian Daniel Albrecht recognises, "biblical" truth emerges in a variety of ways in pentecostalism, including "the voice of God, the word, in biblical messages (for example, sermons, teachings, exhortations), testimonial narratives and charismatic words".[112]

Regarding the authority of testimonial narratives, James Smith argues that "Testimony is central to Pentecostal spirituality because 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] Similarly, Anderson describes

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[109] Walter J. Hollenweger, "What Happens to Scripture in Church and School?," *Journal of Beliefs and Values* 4, no. 2 (1983): 18. Quoted in Price, *Theology Out of Place*, 44.

[110] Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 196.

[111] P. Alexander, "Christ at the Checkpoint," 66.

[112] Daniel E. Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 229.

[113] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, xxii.

the intrinsic narrative theology that has characterised pentecostalism from its origins into the twenty-first century.[114] This has preserved, in some ways, the pentecostal reliance on storytelling and oral traditions and may also be a factor in the rapid growth of pentecostalism.[115] Of particular utility is the writing of Methodist turned Orthodox theologian Jeffrey Lamp, who argues that narrative epistemology has established its place in the pentecostal worldview in three specific ways that have retained popularity among pentecostal leaders and scholars:

> [1] From its beginnings, Pentecostals identified their particular experience of the Spirit with the narrative of Acts. [2] Pentecostals saw themselves as a restoration movement within Christianity, a fulfillment of biblical prophecy and the embodiment of the new thing that God was doing in their midst. As such, Pentecostals are a people firmly embedded within the narrative of God's salvation in Christ, self-consciously finding their connection to the great story in Acts 2, [3] [W]here their experience of the Spirit parallels that of the early community phenomenologically and missionally.[116]

Despite the broad support of narrative significance in pentecostal circles, there are also critics of the pentecostal-narrative compatibility. For instance, biblical scholar John Poirier argues that while dialogue exists between the two, pentecostalism and narrative

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[114] This reliance of Pentecostals on storytelling and oral traditions may correlate with the rapid growth of Pentecostalism. Robert W. Hefner, "The Unexpected Modern-Gender, Piety, and Politics in the Global Pentecostal Surge," in *Global Pentecostalism in the 21st Century*, ed. Robert W. Hefner (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013), 14.

[115] This is particularly true in the global south, where premodern cultures, which rely heavily on narrative, have enhanced its reach and influence. Ibid.

[116] Jeffrey Lamp, "The Spirit and the Story: Some Pentecostal Musings on Robert W. Jenson's View of Scripture," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 20 (2011): 11. Also see Kenneth J. Archer, "A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century: Spirit, Scripture and Community," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series*, no. 28 (2004): 94–126; Kenneth J. Archer and Andrew S. Hamilton, "Scandalous Partners in Protest: A Continuing Dialogue," in P. Alexander, *Pentecostals and Nonviolence*, 321–322. (Archer served as SPS President in 2015.)

theology are in many ways incompatible. Steven Kepnes defines narrative theology as follows: "theology that involves a retelling of narratives of the Bible in such a way that the central issues of the contemporary situation are expressed and addressed".[117] Poirier argues that the difficulty with this position is the assumption that "one can easily express and address present situations in one's reading of a text without violating a presumption that the text's meaning rests with the author's intention".[118] Furthermore he also notes that the creedal traditions of the church have universally been understood as proposition, and at no time in history have they been understood as narrative.[119] In essence, a narrative approach affronts the Bible's, and any authoritative text's, historical contingency, rendering it so open to both interpretation and application that any sense of meaningful authority is lost. Nevertheless, for this argument to be sustainable Poirier must assume that pentecostals a priori elevate the historicity of the Bible above its transcendentality—its ability to speak and function beyond its contextuality, and moreover the ability of the Spirit to work in the present regardless of these parameters.

At face value, pentecostal praxis does not appear to support Poirier's implicit assumption. Their preaching and teaching, for example, seems to reflect a concern for the present, over attending to the past, generally adopting a "here and now" over a "there and then" orientation.[120] Furthermore, as described by Hollenweger, "the sermon seems to have other functions to those who have already experienced salvation, it gives a language and provides a narrative community in which they can articulate their newly-found freedom".[121] At this point, I am not arguing that pentecostalism's narrative flavour

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[117] Steven Kepnes, *The Text as Thou: Martin Buber's Dialogical Hermeneutics and Narrative Theology* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992), 125.

[118] John C. Poirier, "Narrative Theology and Pentecostal Commitments," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 16 (2008): 70.

[119] Ibid., 74.

[120] Martin Mittelstadt, past President of SPS in 2019, describes this as follows: "Pentecostals proclaim that propositional truth cannot report the whole truth. Narrative approaches to Scripture create expectations for future encounters with God, helping the believing community transform God's 'Great Story' into 'our story'". Martin William Mittelstadt, "My Life as a Menno-costal: A Personal and Theological Narrative," in P. Alexander, *Pentecostals and Nonviolence*, 328.

[121] Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 255.

is without its challenges, and despite a narrative leaning with regard to teaching, it is also an assumption to conclude that pentecostals do not care about historicity. To argue that a contextually meaningful experience of the text is mutually exclusive of its historical importance is a shallow and incomplete understanding of pentecostalism.[122]

Hollenweger is one such theologian who would challenge Poirier's assumption—that narrative approaches to the Bible prioritise individualistic and relativistic readings at the expense of historical and contextual ones. Hollenweger's "narrative exegesis" is NOT "Bibliodrama", writing that "The Bibliodrama asks the question: What do I hear, feel and understand in this text? This might be a legitimate exercise in some cases, but it is not what a theologian is called upon to do. Narrative exegesis asks the question: who has written this text, for whom and why?"[123] While sounding remarkably similar to historical-critical approaches commonly deployed, Lynne Price illuminates Hollenweger's distinct emphasis: "the origins, transformation and re-adaptation of the biblical stories are made accessible to the whole people of God".[124] She goes on to explain that "his interest is not with producing a new hermeneutic, but valuing the fruit of biblical scholarship in such a way to ensure its dissemination amongst the majority who are not academically trained".[125] This is not striving simply for "relevance" but for "biblical and truthful extensive relevance". In this regard, "he does not conform to the conventional rules of engagement"[126] followed by preachers of both academic and pentecostal stripes; rather he "democratizes the task" of biblical scholarship, insisting that the "entire Christian community should be involved in the process".[127]

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[122] Poirier rightly alludes to the intolerant and unaccommodating approaches to authorial intention by strands of postmodern literary theory. Poirier, "Narrative Theology and Pentecostal Commitments," 70. But Augustine, in discussing the function of hagiographic discourse and communal economic ethics, insists that "a sense of historical veracity is necessary to generate moral practices in the text's addressees". Daniela C. Augustine, *The Spirit and the Common Good: Shared Flourishing in the Image of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2019), 211. What use is any ethical text that communicates only symbolic or allegorical meaning?

[123] Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 325.

[124] Price, *Theology Out of Place*, 44.

[125] Ibid., 45.

[126] Ibid., 58.

[127] Ibid., 60.

Further to Grey, Lamp, and Hollenweger, pentecostal theologian Kenneth Archer also recognises pentecostalism's narrative centre. He argues for a narrative-orientated hermeneutic on the basis that it "allows for the dialectic interaction of the text and reader in the negotiation of meaning. Pentecostals by their very nature are inherently storytellers. They primarily transmit their theology through oral means".[128] Archer furthers his methodological position with substantive claims regarding the content of a pentecostal narrative using familiar terms such as: revivalist, restitution of primitive Christianity, promise fulfilment, and outpouring of the Holy Spirit.[129] Poirier's major contention with Archer's position is not the suggestion that the Bible is primarily a story, but Archer's failure to distinguish between narrative theology and narrative criticism.[130] Furthermore narrative theology is quite often a hermeneutic sold as a middle ground for those seeking to avoid "the extreme positions of fundamentalism and liberalism".[131] As Archer seems to be grounding his arguments in a conflation of narrative criticism and narrative theology, Poirier's criticism, in this case, has some methodological merit beyond asserting relativism.

Nevertheless, in lieu of further clarification from Archer, it seems to be the case that Poirier has not fully grasped pentecostalism's relationship to "narrative". The broader problem with Poirier's argument, however, is more fundamental. He presumes upon what should be important to pentecostals (such as historical criticism) and superimposes these

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[128] Archer, "Pentecostal Hermeneutic," 166. Synergising the affinity for storytelling with the earlier comments regarding the socioeconomic status of many early pentecostal communities, along with their strained relationship with education, Hollenweger notes the narrative mastery of Pentecostals: "the Pentecostal poor are oral, nonconceptual peoples who are often masters of story". Karla O. Poewe, "The Pentecostal Elites and the Pentecostal Poor: A Missed Dialogue?," in *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture*, ed. Karla O. Poewe (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 213. See also Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 62–71.

[129] Archer and Hamilton, "Scandalous Partners in Protest," 321. Included in his summary are also critical marks of the Pentecostal narrative such as "the zealous desire for world evangelism, holy living according to the New Testament, and concern for the 'least of these.'" Ibid., 321–322.

[130] Poirier, "Narrative Theology and Pentecostal Commitments," 72.

[131] Moreover, "the implicit claim that narrative theologians represent the voice of continuity with classical theology is, of course, ridiculous. Classical theology does not share the set of anti-intentionalist and antipropositionalist ideas that comprise the narrativist worldview". Ibid., 74.

presumptions without careful attention to how their ethos might be different from alternative priorities. In other words, Poirier has applied his own hermeneutic of suspicion without considering pentecostalism on its own terms and its narrative proclivities.

While we cannot cleanly resolve these disputes in this short summary, pentecostalism's narrative tendencies, particularly regarding its spirituality, homiletics, and theology, do not directly supply moral content but highlight an alternative way in which morality and ethics might be communally received. To conclude the overview of pentecostal moral historiography, pentecostalism's public ethics will be addressed through a summary of its relationship with social justice.

1.2.6 Pentecostalism and Social Justice

Pentecostal theologian Wolfgang Vondey outlines pentecostalism's historical relationship with social justice. While noting a clear "social dynamic", particularly in poorer, developing communities globally, as well as the upwardly mobile middle classes of the west, he suggests that the "social" focus was partitioned into two practical approaches: firstly, the activism message that viewed practical social engagement favourably, addressing issues of economics, oppression, injustice, etc. and secondly, the passivism approach, which focused on inspirational "health and wealth" preaching and spirituality.[132]

Elaborating on the former, Anderson argues pentecostal social engagement carries historical precedent. For example, in the American context, pentecostals have in some circumstances been at the vanguard of social ethics such as "issues of discrimination and equality on the basis of race, class or gender".[133] Many of the early pentecostal churches established communities blind to these distinctions and Hollenweger highlights the revolutionary flavour of early American pentecostalism as the "cleaving" of the races.[134] Historically, Castelo writes, "The conditions were ripe for classical pentecostalism within America to provide an embodied sign of racial reconciliation and healing that would

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[132] Vondey, *Pentecostalism*, 90.

[133] Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 261.

[134] Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 30–31.

anticipate the soon-coming manifold reign of God's kingdom".[135] This is not to say the ideal was sustained consistently or perfectly throughout pentecostalism's expansion. For example, particularly in the southern United States, many churches capitulated to the regional segregationist traditions.[136] Nevertheless, the lived social experiences of historical pentecostal communities provided fertile ground for moral reflection that theoretically could lead to some radical social changes, beginning in the church and expanding thereafter.[137]

The holiness and evangelical influences on pentecostal ethics, to some degree, were able to explain the decline in the early pentecostal "social program". The former's prioritisation of personal transformation and the latter's suspicion of the secular social agenda likely diluted the public impact of pentecostalism. Although addressing structural injustice was short-lived in North American pentecostalism, pentecostalism's social transformative impact extended into the poverty-stricken global south.[138] For example, Hollenweger writes that "a number of Latin American Pentecostals are seeing the necessity for dealing with structural injustice, acknowledging that personal ethics is

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[135] Daniel Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics: The Epicletic Community* (Cleveland, TN: CPT, 2012), 79. See also Michael Wilkinson and Steven M. Studebaker, "Pentecostal Social Action: An Introduction," in *A Liberating Spirit: Pentecostals and Social Action in North America*, ed. Michael Wilkinson and Steven M. Studebaker (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2010), 10–11.

[136] "As students of the movement's history know, however, the opposite happened in that Pentecostalism capitulated to the segregationist pressures of the pre-Civil Rights era. Was this capitulation a failure of the Spirit's work of adequately infusing the gift of grace of divine charity on the hearts of early Pentecostals?" Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics*, 79. Alexander writes that some Pentecostals "confronted the injustices of racism, sexism, and economic disparity. Others perpetuated the problems". Paul Nathan Alexander, "Series Preface," in *A Liberating Spirit: Pentecostals and Social Action in North America*, ed. Michael Wilkinson and Steven M. Studebaker, (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2010), vii. For examples of these mixed responses see Cecil M. Robeck and Amos Yong, *The Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 75–80. And P. Alexander, "Speaking in the Tongues of Nonviolence," 4. Robeck and Yong served as Presidents of SPS in 1983 and 2009, respectively.

[137] Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 60.

[138] Vondey argues that one of the most influential factors impacting pentecostal social engagement are the socio-economic conditions. Vondey, *Pentecostalism*, 90–97.

necessary, but not sufficient".[139] The economic and political realities of the global south provide an explicit context in which the addressing of structural sin can often be a matter of life and death; in western pentecostal contexts, the needs are less visible and explicit.

Given the social and economic context of western pentecostalism, it is easy to misconstrue the relationship between the social mission and evangelistic mission of the church. Along these lines, in-house critics have argued that the relationship between evangelisation and social responsibility has often been misappropriated or misunderstood.[140] Theologian Shane Clifton suggests that often "social concern is seen as a method of selling the ministry of the church to individuals and society as a whole, rather than something intimately connected to the gospel".[141] Estrelda Alexander, another pentecostal scholar, recalls one of her seminars at Regent University School of Divinity, where she was interrupted by a student in attendance. During a discussion on social engagement the student asked, "What does this have to do with the saving of souls?" The student quickly added that "if it had nothing to do with the evangelistic endeavour, there was no sense in carrying the discussion further".[142] This brief exchange is embedded in the larger theological context of soteriology and the disconnects between evangelistic and social dimensions of the church's mission. In a similar vein, Dempster uses the adjective "meaningless" in reference to the pentecostal perspective on social service and social action and cites an Assemblies of God editorial written in 1989 encouraging church leaders and congregants to dispense with "Any church activity that does not lead to

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[139] Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 209. See, for example, the writing of Chilean pentecostal Juan Sepúlveda. Juan Sepúlveda, "Pentecostalism and Liberation Theology: Two Manifestations of the Work of the Holy Spirit for the Renewal of the Church," in *All Together in One Place: Theological Papers from the Brighton Conference on World Evangelization*, ed. Harold D. Hunter and Peter D. Hocken (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 2019).

[140] Vondey, *Pentecostalism*, 89–91. See also Murray Dempster's description of the relationship between Pentecostal eschatlogy and social concern. Murray Dempster, "Christian Social Concern in Pentecostal Perspective: Reformulating Pentecostal Eschatology," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 2 (1993): 51–52.

[141] Shane Clifton and Neil Ormerod, "Pentecostals and Politics," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 10, no. 2 (2007): 233–34.

[142] E. Alexander, "Presidential Address 2010," 338.

[evangelism]".[143] The blurring of these two activities, or in some cases the absorption of social justice initiatives into the rubric of evangelism, delegitimises social justice as a key element of ecclesial mission, one through which a discussion of ethics could be grounded.[144] In many churches, this disconnection displaces the church's social role and mission to the peripheries.

The understanding of this relationship is developing and Dempster challenges pentecostalism to reimagine its approach to these issues: "the church's mission and ministry of evangelism should be augmented to include a commitment to social justice".[145] Scholars such as Paul Alexander have argued further, not for an "augmentation" of mission, but for a "restoration" of the original social mission characteristic of early pentecostals. Alexander suggests that "peace and justice are not separate concerns but different ways of talking about and seeking *shalom*—God's salvation, justice, and peace".[146] In Dempster's words, "Through its social ministry the church testifies to God's eschatological intent to right the wrongs and to establish shalom in the human family and the whole creation".[147]

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[143] Assemblies of God World Missions, "Sidetracked!," *Mountain Movers*, 1989, 3. Quoted in Dempster, "Christian Social Concern," 59–60. At a popular level, evangelical Christianity (in the broader sense of the term) proliferates this understanding, emphasising, as Matthias Wenk puts it, the importance of your name appearing in the book of life, rather than in the newspaper. Matthias Wenk, "The Holy Spirit as Transforming Power within a Society: Pneumatological Spirituality and Its Political/Social Relevance for Western Europe," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 11, no. 1 (2002): 139.

[144] Dhan Prakash, "Toward a Theology of Social Concern: A Pentecostal Perspective," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 13, no. 1 (2010): 72.

[145] Murray Dempster, "Pentecostal Social Concern and the Biblical Mandate of Social Justice," *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 9, no. 2 (1987): 129.

[146] P. Alexander, *Christ at the Checkpoint*, viii. Themes explored in his series on Pentecostals, Peacemaking, and Social Justice include Pentecostal perspectives on gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, economics, class, globalisation, trade, poverty, health, consumerism, development etc. He has also called for a global Pentecostal fellowship, united around peacemaking. See Paul Nathan Alexander, "Spirit-Empowered Peacemaking as Evangelical, Ecumenical, and Pentecostal Opportunity," in P. Alexander, *Pentecostals and Nonviolence*, 305–319.

[147] Dempster, "Christian Social Concern," 59.

Scholars Michael Wilkinson and Steven Studebaker suggest that a way of resolving an apparent absence of a social mission is by cultivating a form of "progressive pentecostalism" by recalling biblical justice themes and historical experiences such as Azusa Street.[148] Miller and Yamamori define "progressive pentecostals" by contrasting them with holiness pentecostals, "an older generation of sectarian Pentecostals [who] tended to focus on personal purity". Instead, "Progressive Pentecostals do not separate Christians from the world of everyday trade and commerce in an artificial attempt to maintain their holiness".[149] Alternatively, scholars such as Dhan Prakash propose a "middle of the road" approach. While critiquing pentecostal social indifference, he proposes that "historically Pentecostals have viewed social concern not in terms of changing social structures but in terms of personal transformation […] By preaching repentance from both individual and social sins the evangelist is directly dealing with the root of all social evil. Unjust social structures are not the root of the problem, they are simply the fruit.—The root is man's sinfulness!"[150] This middle ground unites the emphasis

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[148] Wilkinson and Studebaker, "Pentecostal Social Action," 7–12. See also Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 42–43.

[149] Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 59.

[150] Prakash, "Toward a Theology of Social Concern," 66, 70. There are also coherent proposals in favour of a middle ground that exist in current ethics and theological scholarship, not limited to Pentecostals. The general position is advanced that whenever personal morality eclipses that of social justice, this erroneously overlooks the synthesis between the individual and corporate dimensions of ethics. For example, in the Old Testament's emphasis on legal codes, there is never a disconnection between the activities of the Israelite community and its interactions with its neighbours. For an argument pertaining to the social-political ramifications of the holiness codes, see Richard Bauckham, *The Bible in Politics: How to Read the Bible Politically* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 20–40. Moreover, the exilic periods were marked by a significant departure from these legal codes, which caused a tumultuous outbreak of social injustice to which the biblical prophetic literature explicitly testifies. See Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, rev. ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2001), 39–58. Furthermore, one can argue that the ministry of Jesus restored people to community where circumstances had prevented them from participating. He did this by addressing the socioeconomic, psychological, and physical conditions of those people he engaged. Prakash, "Toward a Theology of Social Concern," 69. From an evangelical perspective, Carl Henry also unites the personal and social concerns in

on holiness and the social impact that should proceed from it. Hollenweger agrees that while opposition to "personal (not societal) evils" holds a privileged position in pentecostal history that gives rise to "individualistic" and "parochial" moral language, "there is also another side to the story".[151]

A further clarification is helpful for those who might highlight personal transformation at the expense of social transformation. While the moral precepts on behaviour are important, they are imbedded in the matrix of a community; so, to avoid "social ethics" entirely seems to be counterproductive. When viewed in this way, the significance of personal morality is enhanced, and it compels people to consider the connections between their own personal behaviour and the effect it has on the broader community. This is essentially ethicist Scott Rae's argument: that personal and social ethics are inseparable; one cannot be considered to the exclusion of the other.[152] While this hypothesis reckons with pentecostalism's theoretical approach to evangelism, holiness, and social concern, the challenge for pentecostals seems to be recognising this connection in their dialogue and argumentation in a way that communicates and highlights their mutual reciprocity.

Vondey argues that the co-existence of different social perspectives within pentecostalism demonstrates that constructing a "homogenous image of Pentecostal social ethics inevitably results in the misleading assumption that either one side is

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the task of preaching the gospel: "The evangelical task primarily is the preaching of the Gospel, in the interest of individual regeneration by the supernatural grace of God, in such a way that divine redemption can be recognized as the best solution of our problems, individual and social". Henry, "Evangelical 'Formula of Protest,'" 7.

[151] Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 208.

[152] Scott B. Rae, *Moral Choices* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 34. Interestingly this is a relationship that American Evangelicals recognised even if their focus remained in the realm of "personal morality". Carl Henry explictly highlights this connection, indeed their interdependence, in a way that directed the evangelical attention towards issues of holiness and argued for its broader social utility. Henry, *Uneasy Conscience*, 21–22. Dempster and Cerillo in their analysis of the resurgence of American evangelical social ethics summarised his argument as follows: "He claimed attacking drunkenness constituted an assult on the liquor traffic, boycotting the theater contributed to the resitance against the spread of secular values, and opposing divorce strengthened the integrity of the family and reduced juvenile delinquency". Cerillo Jr. and Dempster, "Carl F. H. Henry's Early Apologetic," 369.

dominant or that the tensions between both sides are negligible".[153] Although he frames this as a positive, that a multifarious approach could be characterised as a form of "prophetic activism" taking place "in the 'borderlands' of globalization, internationalization, urbanization, and industrialization",[154] it is no surprise that given the accessibility of the synthesis mentioned earlier, accepting this approach can be perceived as relativistic, individualistic, ad hoc, and lacking systematic articulation. Given his argument that these tensions are "here to stay", and that the competing moral histories have had profound effects on the evolution of pentecostalism, it is unlikely that systematic resolution can be achieved by reference to pentecostal historical trends alone.

1.2.7 Summary: Pentecostal Morality Has a Contested History

While this Pentecostal moral historiography is brief, it provides some important context to pentecostal ethics that initially explains why pursuing a study in pentecostal ethics may not be straightforward. Notwithstanding that pentecostalism is still in its historical infancy, the hybrid of holiness and evangelical sensibilities does not produce consistent moral thought. In addition, it leads to tensions in the role and interpretation of the Bible in moral reflection. Interpretations can include literalist deontology, which may be systematic; spiritual narrativity, which applies Scripture freely to issues of the day; and personal and communal reflection, a belief that the interpretive process is itself "Spirit-led". Moreover, as described by Vondey, there is no apparent agreement around an ethical methodology, which is particularly revealed in the ambiguous and somewhat contradictory views toward social transformation. Even the lists of moral prohibitions produced over the decades reveal a variable approach to what is considered acceptable moral behaviour from the pentecostal point of view.[155]

With the lack of consistency across space and time, pentecostal ethics proves to be somewhat of an enigma. Even if the various "pentecostalisms" began with a distinct

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[153] Vondey, *Pentecostalism*, 104.

[154] Ibid., 110. See also Nimi Wariboko, *The Pentecostal Principle: Ethical Methodology in New Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2012), 81–82.

[155] Vondey, *Pentecostalism*, 107, 109.

moral flavour, the coexistence of holiness and evangelical ethics, as well as a divided view on social justice, makes it difficult to identify a consistent and coherent pentecostal ethic.

It is also apparent that attempts to organise pentecostal Christianity neatly as the product of two integrated influences—holiness and evangelicalism, respectively—are also too simplistic. William Faupel, for example, writes that characterisations of pentecostalism as a "sub-group of Evangelicalism, sharing its assumptions, its agenda and its mission […] can only be sustained through a selective reading of Pentecostal history and through an abandonment of many of the initial Pentecostal assumptions".[156] Of this, pentecostal historians seem to be in agreement, that "the initial impulse that gave rise to the movement must be recovered".[157] Whatever this looks like, and the pentecostal moral historiography can only provide so much insight, most importantly it confirms that competing priorities have diluted much of the early social priorities that find their roots in the holiness heritage. In the words of Hollenweger:

[American] Pentecostals have moved away from their own roots. How is it possible that modern American revivalism, with its deep roots in the nineteenth-century holiness movement, can be either so ignorant of or so antagonistic to many of its own tenets, as for example its stand for equal rights for women and slaves, and its fight for peace and justice? How is it possible that a powerful religious movement which directed its religious energies to the solution of the structural ills of its time could become so individualistic and almost blind to its own past?[158]

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[156] Faupel, "Whither Pentecostalism?," 29–30.

[157] Ibid.

[158] Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 189. These critiques and historical analyses are not limited to Warrington, Anderson, and Hollenweger. Dayton and Archer also take similar positions, reminding us that these conversations are critical, though perhaps not central to and determinative of the Pentecostal tradition. See Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1987); Kenneth J. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century: Spirit, Scripture and Community* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2004).

1.3 Conclusion: Pentecostalism's Contested Moral History and Inconsistent Ethics

Chapter 1 began by establishing important terms that are used throughout this thesis, including ethics, morality, pentecostal and pentecostalism, and by highlighting how even the use of terms, particularly what is meant by "pentecostal", can create challenges when trying to understand what it means to speak of a pentecostal ethic. A brief history of pentecostalism was also noted, with particular attention given to its diversity, as well as the key doctrinal and experiential distinctives that are often used to identify the movement, its churches, and congregants.

Following these introductory explorations, I outlined a pentecostal moral historiography that covered the Methodist and holiness origins of pentecostalism and the attendant moral implications. This was followed by a consideration of the evangelical influences on the movement, along with their corresponding moral implications. Given the priority that is placed on the biblical text in pentecostal practice and spirituality, a further analysis noted how the use of the Bible in pentecostal circles impacted the way morality was established and elaborated, particularly in the context of preaching. This was then contrasted against the narrative proclivities of pentecostalism and the implications of narrative epistemology on Bible reading, application, and morality. The historiography concluded with a summary of pentecostalism's relationship with social justice and engagement, noting the challenges the movement has experienced in articulating and outworking a coherent approach to broader public morality and the tensions that existed between the sectarian and progressive approaches inherent in the movement.

This chapter resolved that the apparent methodological inconsistencies in pentecostal ethics may be explained, at least in part, by the historical tensions arising between the holiness and evangelical strands, both of which are rooted in pentecostalism's history. Further, inconsistencies are likely to arise because of differing notions of biblical inerrancy, a narrative orientation, and potentially subjective readings of the Bible. Soteriological diversity also would influence the missional focus of pentecostalism, such that views emphasising social justice and views emphasising individual heavenly salvation would likely produce variance in their priorities and subsequent moral agendas.

To further explore the scope of methodological inconsistency in pentecostal ethics, I undertake a case study of a contemporary Pentecostal denomination. I analyse

the literature pertaining to the Australian Christian Churches (ACC) to present the theological problems faced by a contemporary Pentecostal church in formulating its moral theology. These documents are critiqued and examined to establish how the ACC support their moral positions. This will strengthen the argument that moral tensions in pentecostal ethics are not only a historical issue, but one that pervades contemporary pentecostal moral discourse. The historical tensions described above exist in the contemporary pentecostal space and indicate that, at least in the ACC movement, an inconsistent methodology produces incoherent ethical positions. By examining the published positions of a particular movement, the theoretical observations above can be tested, and the extent of the incoherency can be established.

CHAPTER 2

A CRITIQUE OF PENTECOSTAL ETHICS IN PRACTICE

2.1 Introduction: The Legacy of a Contested Moral History

Having explored some of the challenges inherent in pentecostal ethics emerging from the parallel antecedent traditions—holiness and evangelicalism—I now substantiate the claim that pentecostal ethics appears to lack a consistent methodological approach by critically analysing the ethical position papers developed by a Pentecostal denomination, the Australian Christian Churches (ACC). The statements were produced between 1992 and 2016 and were made available to me specifically for this project.[1] Each statement is individually considered but also grouped into a broader thematic category for organisational purposes.

This chapter illuminates how pentecostal ethics is articulated within a denominational leadership context and identifies the specific issues that have triggered a denominational response. By applying a hermeneutic of suspicion, this analysis demonstrates that the challenges outlined in chapter 1 materialise in the ethics statements. Threads of both holiness and evangelicalism emerge, as well as disparate and seemingly unrelated ethical justifications. This again highlights the apparent inconsistency in methodology that can lead to disparate conclusions, resulting in a lack of coherency.

2.1.1 Analysis of Denominational Literature

Pentecostal denominations routinely produce statements outlining their positions on ethical issues. These denominations include the Assemblies of God in the United States (AG), the Assemblies of God in the United Kingdom (AOG), and the Australian Christian Churches (ACC). These papers are published on the internet and are generally accessible

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[1] To advance this study, I requested access to the ethical positional statements that were published by my own denomination, the Australian Christian Churches (ACC). The National Executive disclosed the available documents to me, papers that were created between 1992 to 2016, on the understanding they were going to be used for critical analysis in this thesis.

to those who seek them.[2] According to Cecil Robeck, the AG's position papers, developed at the national level, are generally held in "high regard" even though, within the AG's organisational and doctrinal structures, they "have no legal standing; they are only advisory".[3] This seems to indicate that formal documentation retains some fluidity and flexibility and functions consultatively rather than constitutionally. There is an index of positional papers on theological and ethical issues as well as a list of official statements that respond to issues of current public concern.[4] This thesis will explore the ACC's positional statements as a case study of pentecostal ethics in the ecclesial context.

The rationale behind the choice of the ACC includes the geographic location of this project as well as my own personal proximity to this denomination. Furthermore, this proximity has allowed the access to a discreet catalogue of ethical positions that were developed by the ACC to assist their ministers navigate ethical issues. A noteworthy characteristic of this body of literature is that, ordinarily, it is not disclosed to the public. This nondisclosure clarifies, in quite explicit terms, the intended audience: the pastors and leaders of the denomination. Given the purpose and audience of the statements, the internal logic and rationales of the statements are likely a reflection of both the ACC's positions and the methodologies to which they subscribe.

This analysis implements a hermeneutic of suspicion with a view to illuminating the apparent methodological inconsistencies and incoherencies of the overall approach adopted by the ACC. In particular, the statements will be examined in light of the historical tensions identified in chapter 1 that render pentecostal ethics vulnerable to inconsistency. These include the way pentecostals read and interpret Scripture, the prioritisation of issues of personal holiness, and their relationship with social justice. Section 2.2 reviews in detail the content of the statements and following this analysis, a summary of the findings is provided to clarify the clear challenges that pertain to the pentecostal ethics of the ACC.

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[2] A clear and orderly collections of statements can be found on the American AG's website and can be publicly viewed. Assemblies of God, "AG Position Papers and Other Statements," 2021, accessed September 6, 2021, https://ag.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers.

[3] That is, they have not been ratified by the AG's governing bodies and are not mentioned in the constitution or by-laws. Robeck Jr., "Word, Spirit, and Discernment," 145.

[4] Assemblies of God, "AG Position Papers."

2.1.2 Introduction to the ACC Literature

The ACC have produced twelve documents on diverse topics ranging from abortion and in vitro fertilization (IVF) to sexuality and marriage. In recent years, the ACC have also produced papers on social issues such as poverty and refugees. The statements were compiled between 1992 and 2016. Unlike documents by the AG, the ACC's documents are not readily accessible as they are embedded in the "pastors only" area of their website. This deviates from the AG's deployment of their statements given that the ACC's papers are not intended for public reference, but primarily for internal discussion and professional guidance. It is simultaneously possible though that the ACC do not intend their statements to be implemented as policy, which would reflect their American counterpart.[5]

Given that the ACC's intended audience is restricted to ordained ministers, it is important to note that congregations are not directly informed on ethical issues by the positional statements (as they do not have access to them) but via other avenues, including, but not limited to, sermons, public statements from church leaders, and direct media releases from ACC member churches. These sources, specifically sermon content, are a variable that may serve to support what is written in these statements or, in some cases, oppose them. —All this to say it is important to clarify that the following analysis explores the "ministerial and organisational" rationality of the ACC's ethics and is unlikely to be representative of the movement's membership in totality, particularly given the diversity within pentecostalism. Given this is an analysis of the methodology underpinning the position papers, it is critical to note that the documents do not explicitly articulate the methodologies by which they were constructed or provide specific rationales, other than using different forms of ethical argumentation to justify the positions. This does not

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[5] I will not offer a comprehensive history of the Australian Christian Churches but focus purely on the positional papers the ACC has published in the last thirty years. Note that in 2007 the ACC underwent a transition that eventuated in its rebranding from the Assemblies of God in Australia (AGA) to the Australian Christian Churches (ACC). The papers written after this transition will be of particular interest. Shane Clifton has written on the History of the AGA in Australia. Shane Clifton, *Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analysing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2009).

negate the possibility of moral deliberation "behind the scenes". Yet, given that this process is not visible or evident, the statements as published are what will be considered.

The closest we come to an underpinning methodology is the ACC's statement regarding the Scriptures in their United Constitution. They recognise the Bible's pre-eminence in matters of faith, doctrine, ethics, and ministerial practice:

> All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is infallible, inerrantly revealing the will of God concerning us all in all things necessary to our salvation and is absolutely supreme and sufficient in authority in all matters of faith and conduct. 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, so that whatever is not contained therein is not to be enjoined as an article of faith.[6]

While all churches recognise the importance of Scripture for ethics, as the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches notes, this quote from the ACC's constitution may be indicative of a general methodological leaning based on a system of doctrinal values, including the possibility of literal readings of Scripture without extensive hermeneutical work.[7] For instance, the statements may lean heavily toward biblically based deontological approaches to ethics, reflective of an evangelical influence and substantiated by inclusions of numerous evidentiary references to Scriptures.[8] The ACC's position on the Bible illuminates a possible methodology intrinsic to their approach to ethical issues and the creation of positional statements.

There are twelve positional papers available from the ACC, including papers dealing with abortion; in vitro fertilisation; homosexuality; human sexuality; pornography; gambling; marriage, divorce, and remarriage; asylum seekers and immigration; poverty

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[6] Australian Christian Churches, "United Constitution (Incorporating National By-Laws)," 2013, 5, accessed April 2016, http://www.acc.org.au/. See Appendix A.

[7] World Council of Churches, *Moral Discernment*, 25.

[8] The evangelical influence on pentecostal morality was explored in chapter 1. Also noted in chapter 1 was the matriculation of evangelical influences into pentecostal practices and approaches to the Bible, that is, biblical literalism and an uncritical subscription to the pillars of biblical inerrancy.

and injustice; and the "Ministerial Code of Conduct". These statements could be examined in a variety of ways. To keep the subject matter of the statements consistent I group the statements, albeit loosely, into four thematic categories. The first category, human life, includes statements on abortion and IVF. The second category, sexuality, includes homosexuality and more general statements on human sexuality. The third category, community challenges, includes pornography, gambling, divorce, and remarriage. The fourth category, social justice, includes asylum seekers and poverty. The final statement examined is the ACC's Ministerial Code of Conduct. If there are more than one statement on an issue, I include them all within the relevant thematic category and arrange them in chronological order. This makes evolution across time clearer. I finish each of these subsections with a summary of the explicit challenges that arise, and then conclude with the outcomes of this broader analysis of the ACC's publications.

2.2 Human Life

The first two documents that will be analysed can be loosely collated into the ethics of human life, or reproductive ethics. They include one statement on abortion, developed in 1992, and one statement on in vitro fertilisation (IVF), also created in 1992.

2.2.1 Abortion, 1992

The statement on abortion is broken down into four subsections under the heading "What the Bible Says About the Unborn Child" and concludes with a paragraph on "Concerned Christians". The four subsections include a biblical position on: when life begins, the creative work of God as the baby develops, the future God has for the baby, and the sovereignty of God over the circumstances of the pregnancy. I will proceed however with the ethical themes that emerge in the document, including the sanctity of life, three broad categories of abortion ("elective", "extenuating circumstances", and "therapeutic") and conclude with a section on practical responses.

2.2.1.1 The Sanctity of Human Life

The ACC argue that from the earliest stages of pregnancy the Bible consistently acknowledges the unborn's life and humanity and that "God's word is very explicit

concerning the taking of innocent human life—you shall not murder".[9] These assumptions characterise the statement and are substantiated to a large degree by scripture references. Furthermore, the ACC note that "There is no distinction made in the value of life between the born and unborn child".[10] In addition to the general scriptural inferences indicating a high value of human life, they refer to passages that reckon with the life of the unborn, specifically Exodus 21. "God instructed Moses to set a law before the children of Israel which brings the sanctity of unborn children into focus."[11] They are referencing a passage that articulates the penalties for accidental or deliberate killing of an unborn child. They infer that because the Scriptures apportion punishment, the "Foetus is recognized as a child and has the same rights as older children".[12] The position paper also refers to Calvin's comments on abortion. This is significant because the ACC are acknowledging contributions beyond the direct pronouncements of Scripture using a theologian to add value to a position arising from the biblical text. While employing the biblical commentary of theologians to provide interpretive assistance is common in Protestant circles, it is less established as a consistent methodology within pentecostalism.[13] "John Calvin made a very significant observation concerning abortion in commenting on Exodus 21:22, 23: The fetus, though enclosed in the womb of his mother, is already a human being, and it is a monstrous crime to rob it of life which it has not yet begun to enjoy."[14] The document then makes the comparison between an abortion and the homicide of a person on his own property. "If it seems more horrible to kill a man in his own house than in a field, because a man's house is his place of most secure refuge, it

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[9] Australian Christian Churches, "A Statement on Abortion," 1992, 1–2, accessed August 2016, http://www.acc.org.au/. See Appendix B.

[10] Ibid., 1.

[11] Ibid., 2.

[12] Ibid., 3.

[13] Indeed, both the experiential emphases of pentecostal practice and the independent authority given to the Bible meant the inclusion of extra-biblical sources of theology were exceptionally rare. This also was the case in "Bible colleges", which, according to Anderson, "became prime generators of [the] new pentecostal fundamentalism, and Western pentecostal denominations gave priority to exporting this theological education to the majority world". Anderson, *Ends of the Earth*, 118–34.

[14] Australian Christian Churches, "Abortion," 1.

ought surely to be deemed more atrocious to destroy a fetus in the womb before it has come to light."[15] This comparison accentuates the understanding held by the ACC that an abortion is a violation of human life in a place of assumed security and safety.

This reasoning demonstrates that as well as employing biblical injunctions, the ACC are drawing from additional sources of authority. Specifically, they invoke Calvin's writing, an example of broader mainstream theological work, and additionally, analogical reasoning, by drawing a comparison between the safety of the womb and the safety of the home. This involves the adoption of "reason" into their argumentation, an indicator that philosophical argumentation may carry some implicit authority in their context. Nevertheless, the reasoning thus far primarily draws its authority from Scripture and any additional reasoning functions as supporting evidence. The primary role of Scripture in this statement, particularly its propositional use, reflects the evangelical sensibilities mentioned in chapter 1, rather than the characteristics of holiness-orientated morality.

2.2.1.2 "Elective" Abortion

The vast majority of abortions take place for "elective" reasons. According to the Guttmacher Institute,[16] elective reasoning includes unplanned pregnancy, economic insecurity, out-of-wedlock pregnancy, failed contraception, alternative priorities such as career or education, relationship and family problems, responsibilities to previous children, a desire to stop having children, clandestine pregnancy, or pressure to terminate the pregnancy from family members and/or spouse/partner.[17]

Responding to elective abortion, the ACC prioritise alternative methods of dealing with unwanted pregnancy, principally adoption. "Concerned Christians should counsel

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[15] Ibid.

[16] The Guttmacher Institute, accessed February 12, 2017, https://www.guttmacher.org/about. Their mission statement says, "The Guttmacher Institute is a leading research and policy organization committed to advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights in the United States and globally". They would generally be perceived as a "pro-choice" organisation.

[17] Lawrence B. Finer et al., "Reasons U.S. Women Have Abortions: Qualitative and Quantitative Perspectives," *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* 37, no. 3 (2005): 110–18. See also Antonia Biggs, Heather Gould, and Diana Greene Foster, "Understanding Why Women Seek Abortions in the US," *BMC Central Women's Health* 13, no. 29 (2013).

those with unwanted pregnancies about the alternative of adoption. They should support Christian agencies. They should lovingly assist in every way possible those wishing to give their children up for adoption."[18] This is consistent with their opposition to abortion based on the value of human life as they do not recognise the mother's "desire for the pregnancy" to be determinative of the unborn's value. Regarding the subjective determination of life's value, such as an unwanted pregnancy resulting in its termination, the ACC, confident that "The Bible recognizes that God is sovereign in all things", warns "When people set themselves up as God to determine if a life is worth living—whether before or after birth—they are rejecting the sovereignty of the creator of all things".[19] For the ACC, the objective value for human life is entirely grounded in biblical injunctions against taking innocent life and scriptural inferences on the personhood of the unborn.

2.2.1.3 Abortion in "Extenuating Circumstances"

In many places around the world where abortion is prohibited or criminalised, there are sometimes exceptions made for "extenuating circumstances". These include situations where the pregnancy is a result of rape or incest, often characterised in such a way that the pregnancy was forced upon the mother. In these tragic instances, it is common for the state to allow abortion, as the woman has been violated, a crime has taken place, and the pregnancy is unwanted.[20] The ACC take a position that prohibits abortion in these circumstances by arguing that "Even when pregnancy in Bible times was due to an illicit relationship, the quality of that life was not questioned. (Lot's daughters pregnant by incest, Bathsheba by adultery.)".[21] Their argument is supported in two ways; firstly, they appeal to Jeremiah 1:5 and the sovereignty of God—that he can make good of tragic circumstances. "The Bible recognizes that God has plans for the unborn child. Only he knows the potential of this new life."[22] Secondly, based on their earlier arguments, the

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[18] Australian Christian Churches, "Abortion," 3.

[19] Ibid., 2.

[20] See, for example, United Nations, "World Abortion Policies, 2013," accessed February 12, 2017, http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/policy/world-abortion-policies-2013.shtml.

[21] Australian Christian Churches, "Abortion," 1.

[22] Ibid., 2.

circumstances of the conception should not dictate the worth of pre-born humans. Both arguments are grounded on scriptural principles.

2.2.1.4 *"Therapeutic" Abortion*

The other difficult group of scenarios that are often raised in abortion ethics are those in which the mother's life is threatened by the continuation of the pregnancy. The ACC do not make a moral judgement on these scenarios and allow for a range of responses. As an initial step, they prescribe prayer: "Should such an isolated situation develop, and if after prayer for healing God in his wisdom does not miraculously intervene, the individuals involved would need to look to God for further guidance". [23] This instruction is consistent with their earlier arguments relating to the "divine will" and is resonant with a voluntarist approach to ethics, namely, complete submission to the will of God.[24] Further to this scenario, they note that "The diagnosis of attending prolife physicians will be helpful in arriving at the proper conclusion".[25] This inclusion indicates that termination might be a viable decision if certain criteria are met, but there is no clarification of the particular criteria that need to be established, nor direction on how to resolve this possibility in light of the absolutist prohibitions throughout the rest of the statement.

While moral distinctions between elective and therapeutic abortion are made in ethical discourse, they are not elaborated on by the ACC. This indicates that they are either uncomfortable endorsing abortion in any circumstances for fear of further relaxation on exceptions to the rule, or they do not currently have nuanced positions on the various categories of abortion. Notwithstanding this ambiguity, they are comfortable deferring such extenuating decisions to a pro-life doctor and the mother—allowing for medical advice to inform moral decisions beyond their theological and biblically informed positions. This is despite their earlier appeals to the sovereignty of God. The lack of specific detail could possibly be because they want to remain completely consistent in

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Mark Murphy, "Theological Voluntarism," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Stanford, CA: Metaphysics Research Lab, 2019), https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/voluntarism-theological/.

[25] Australian Christian Churches, "Abortion," 2.

their position, rather than be seen to compromise. If this is the case, then abortion is an example of the ACC allowing a pre-determined moral position to govern their methodology, and not vice versa. Alternatively, framing such situations in terms of divine sovereignty and prayer, and an apparent avoidance of explicit guidance on how decisions about vital conflicts could be resolved, could be reflective of holiness themes in the pentecostal tradition. Strict "evangelical" biblical interpretation apparently prohibiting any intervention seems here to be put aside in favour of more "Spirit-led" discernment in particular circumstances.[26]

Regardless of this speculation, the tension between the ACC's position on the sovereignty of God and the deferral to medically informed choices in extenuating circumstance remains unresolved. A totalising belief in God's sovereignty would not take issue with leaving the consequences up to divine destiny and keeping the biblical principles intact. Furthermore, the lack of direction to resolve moral conflicts on an issue that they have maintained to be almost entirely clear-cut remains conspicuous.

2.2.1.5 Practical Responses

Firstly, the ACC exhort their readers to pray about these issues, for those in influential positions, and for the moral climate of society. "Christians should earnestly pray for divine intervention in the affairs of men. This would eliminate degrading national moral standards and consequently the laws that permit evils such as abortion on demand for convenience."[27] And secondly, in addition to the support given for adoption as an alternative approach to unwanted pregnancy, the ACC statement concludes with a political directive for those interested in how to engage this issue in the public square. This amounts not only to a general endorsement of the pro-life position politically, but perhaps more consequentially, the previous biblical arguments and theological appeals to God's sovereignty are sidelined in favour of explicit political activism. "Concerned

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[26] While the ACC could defer to Scripture to supplement their argument they choose not to do so, instead favouring an "open-ended" conclusion on this point. A more "Evangelical"-flavoured approach might include Scriptures to support their ambiguous conclusion—for example, evangelical Norman Geisler does not deny the existence of moral conflicts but nevertheless codifies Scripture and God's moral law, rather than the "Spirit's leading", as the pre-eminent guide. Geisler, *Christian Ethics*, 97–115.

[27] Australian Christian Churches, "Abortion," 3.

Christians should actively support prolife legislation and oppose any legislation designed to destroy the moral fibre of society." [28] While not elaborating on the concept of "moral fibre", they also seem to support an activist position on political engagement, encouraging constituents to lobby on political issues. "As citizens of our country they should express their opinions to governmental representatives. They should become influential in determining the kind of people who will be placed in public office. They should encourage committed Christians to seek positions of influence." [29] This is at direct variance with apolitical approaches historically taken by many pentecostals, but consistent with some of the direct political engagement that characterised evangelically influenced American pentecostalism.[30] The desire for pentecostals to take positions of public office seems to be fuelled by a concern that some of the cultural trends in society are beginning to influence the church, the opposite of what the ACC desire. "Instead of the standards of the church being influenced by humanistic and even atheistic philosophies, a church thoroughly rooted in the eternal truths of God's word can lift the standards of society." [31] The notion of a "moral society" is one that is raised at various points throughout the ACC's documentation, which is to be expected if the historical trends are anything to go by. The question as to how "social moral transformation" is to take place is not explored further and given the emphasis on biblical substantiation of their moral positions, the transformative dimension, which can give rise to personal holiness and virtue, is conspicuously absent from the reasoning provided in this statement. As well as publishing a paper on abortion in 1992, the ACC also produced a positional statement on a related issue, in vitro fertilisation.

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[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 240. For example, many of Aimee Semple McPherson's writings were apolitical so as not to appear combative with the state, particularly during war time. Pipkin, "Foursquare Church and Pacifism," 85. The shifts in the AG's position on pacifism are well documented and summarised earlier in this thesis.

[31] Australian Christian Churches, "Abortion," 3.

2.2.2 In Vitro Fertilisation, 1992

The statement on IVF was published the same year as the abortion paper but does not follow the same structure. Instead, it includes several subsections titled: "Infertility", "Legal Dilemmas", "IVF Issue", "Single Parenthood", and "Serious Considerations". Consequently, I will address each of these, beginning with reproductive issues pertaining to IVF and the subject of infertility. This will be followed by a discussion of the role of prayer and conscience, and by an analysis of the legal complexity.

2.2.2.1 Trans-reproductive In Vitro Fertilisation

The ACC take a neutral position on IVF as a biomedical and reproductive technology. Rather than taking a biblical and deontological position as they do with abortion, they indicate that the purpose and context provide the qualification for IVF's moral evaluation. "We oppose any use of IVF techniques to fertilize eggs that will be used for any purpose other than assisting the married donors to conceive and give birth to a child."[32] This clearly articulates their position against IVF for any purpose other than marital reproduction. "We would oppose experimentation and the use of fetal tissues for experimentation."[33] Additionally, they are "opposed to the 'brokerage' of babies and unscrupulous, illegal and immoral practices that are found in some places".[34] This highlights that the intentions behind certain actions are important to the ACC and that the desired outcomes often influence the moral status given to a particular action. For example, they are opposed to IVF for commercial and experimental use.

2.2.2.2 Reproductive In Vitro Fertilisation

While the ACC approve of IVF under certain conditions (a married heterosexual couple attempting conception), they do object to its use in situations outside the traditional Christian family unit. Specifically, they "oppose the use of artificial reproductive techniques to provide children for single women, [including] women who want children

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[32] Australian Christian Churches, "A Statement on In Vitro Fertilisation," 1992, 1, accessed August 2015, http://www.acc.org.au/. See Appendix C.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

without marriage and sexual intercourse, or lesbian couples. The Scripture promotes the family as the God-given environment for the conception, birth and nurture of children".[35] Despite not providing scriptural support for this argument, it appears that models of family outside of married heterosexual monogamy are problematic for the ACC. Their comments on IVF suggest that certain family structures and values are the ACC's primary concern. IVF seems to be a secondary issue insofar as the process can potentially undermine the traditional family unit and circumvent the ideal marital contexts that the ACC support. Despite asserting that their arguments regarding the good of the Christian family are scriptural, there are no explicit references to Scripture to support their claim, suggesting that their endorsement of the nuclear family is informed by alternate authorities, such as conservative social norms.

2.2.2.3 Infertility

If the ACC approve of IVF in particular circumstances, it seems that these circumstances are reasonably limited. One of those indications is that they do not support reproduction that makes sexual activity redundant. "Receiving sperm from a spouse may circumvent the act of love as the sperm is often provided by masturbation. If they could feel they are able to accept this with a clear conscience, there seems to be no scriptural guide to prevent them doing so."[36] In this example, though conscience plays an active role, it is still submitted to Scripture and only employed if the biblical guidelines are unclear. This approach is indicative that the ACC might default to Scripture when commandments are direct and explicit, consistent with some evangelical approaches to the Bible, and then defer to alternatives such as conscience more resonant with Spirit-led holiness and virtue. The most common scenario where this would be the case within a marriage is where the couple are unable to conceive naturally. Infertility alone does not seem to be the only condition that demarks the ACC's approval as they also suggest that sperm and (by assumption) egg donors are problematic. "However it is argued that accepting donated sperm is approving of procreation without sexual intercourse and allowing a foreign

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[35] Ibid., 2.

[36] Ibid., 1.

element to intrude into the exclusive relationship of the husband and wife."[37] The challenges here indicate that they disapprove of foreign (nonmarital) genetic contributions to the IVF process and, more broadly, that they advocate that familial offspring possess genetic material from both parents. In their previous statement, on abortion, however, it should be noted that the ACC accept adoption as a superior response to unwanted pregnancy, indicating that the principles at play might be ordered in some form of unarticulated but intuitive hierarchy.

2.2.2.4 Prayer and Conscience

The statement on IVF is unique as it refers to a broader collection of moral sources. There are appeals to personal prayer, conviction, and conscience more so than in any other official document. For example, "It is vital for the Christian couple to determine to the satisfaction of their conscience that they are not committing the sin of adultery",[38] presumably insofar as using donors could equate to indirect adultery with a third party. Following this directive, the ACC indicate that the couple should "prayerfully look at the scripture and arrive at their decision with a clear conscience and a strong personal understanding of scripture".[39] These two appeals to conscience indicate that the ACC are comfortable, to some degree, to empower congregation members (via the conduit of their pastor) to make decisions without clear ecclesial instruction. This could be indicative of an ethical practice that leaves much of the moral landscape open to the judgements of individuals, or alternatively, judgements shaped by the values of the pentecostal community, mediated by their church. Moreover, these issues, as with many contemporaneous ethical issues, are ambiguous, lacking biblical precedent or prohibition. An additional issue for careful deliberation by the couple intending to proceed with IVF is their disposition toward the child. This issue is articulated as follows: "the couple considering IVF should also prayerfully consider the legal implications and they should be sure they can commit themselves unreservedly to nurture and love the child conceived

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[37] Ibid., 2.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

by IVF".[40] This principle is certainly not limited to IVF; the responsibility of child rearing, whether children enter the family by natural conception, adoption, foster caring, or IVF, should be seriously considered by any prospective parent.

2.2.2.5 Legal Complexity

Out of concern for the child, a topic raised very little in the positional papers, the ACC recognise that the situation of multiple parents (including the involvement of donors) may cause confusion and difficulty for the child. "There could be further parental imbalance as a child conceived in this way is not genetically related to the father. The child has two fathers and one mother. This may also be difficult for the child to cope with if he or she sees themselves as a product of artificial reproductive techniques."[41] Of course, these same challenges exist for pregnancies resulting from adultery or rape, as well as child rearing resulting from adoption. Additionally, the ACC, without quoting specific Scriptures, suggest that "the scriptures require the biological father to accept responsibility for the child he conceives. This may not be possible in the IVF program and could cause legal problems if the donor is recognized as the father".[42] Along a similar trajectory, the complexity of the legal status of the child and any surplus fertilised embryos would be problematic in the case of divorce or separation: "Who has the legal right to fertilised eggs in the case of a divorce?"[43]

The IVF document does not specify where the ACC stand regarding surplus fertilised embryos as a unique ethical conundrum, nor do they comment on the discarding of such embryos. If read in conjunction with the statement on abortion, one could infer that the destruction of embryos from IVF has a moral equivalency to abortion. The only variance to this would be if the ACC recognised that the implantation of the embryo represents a unique moral step in the development of the child. Regardless, the ACC are silent on this element of the discussion, leaving an awkward tension between biblically supported statements on personhood from conception in the abortion statement, and

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[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid.

the absence of such language in favour of "conscience of the parents" in the IVF statement. They finish with a conclusive statement regarding the latter topic, outlining a restrictive and limited endorsement of IVF technology: "We support the right of a married couple to engage in the IVF program for their own propagation when they alone are donors. We disapprove of all other IVF alternatives".[44]

2.2.3 Summary of Statements: Human Life

The position papers on human life reveal several challenges with the ACC's ethics. The first of these applies to most of the documents: the overall methodological approach that the ACC have adopted remains unarticulated. Therefore, when the papers oscillate between eclectic methods of reasoning, nothing exists that can harmonise them or explain their coexistence. Furthermore, a significant contradiction appears to exist between the abortion and IVF positions, by which the former emphasises that life begins at conception and is laden with Scriptures upholding the value of human life, and the latter neglects applying that principle, explicitly regarding fertilised embryos that are not implanted as part of the IVF process. If this principle were to be applied, then the embryos would be classified as unborn children.

Regarding the use of eclectic methodology, the abortion paper specifically includes strong scripturally derived rationalisations, particularly macro principles against taking innocent human life, as well as references to more specific biblical passages. Immediately following, however, there is the inclusion of: Protestant theological tradition (Calvin) and philosophical argumentation, or persuasion by analogy. The more detailed the ACC are, the more confused they seem to become. For example, a strong deontological argument is presented in opposition to abortion while simultaneously withholding this position on the rare occasion where the mother's life might be endangered by the pregnancy. Instead, prayer is invoked (the seeking of miraculous intervention), or, alternatively, the expertise of a pro-life physician is sought for advice. In the latter scenario, motivation and the expertise of medical professionals clearly take a primary role in establishing a moral position, indicating that the sanctity of all human life from conception seems to take a secondary role in moral deliberation in difficult cases.

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[44] Ibid.

Furthermore, for a group who are reliant on prayer and the miraculous in individual circumstances, their comfortableness with political activism seems dissonant, given both their strong belief in God's sovereignty, and the movement's historical apolitical tendencies. The activist political engagement described is more consistent with the evangelical approach (live morally good lives and influence society to do the same through the social structures) rather than the holiness approach, which steers clear of engaging culture in a direct sense and instead focuses on individual transformation.

Although similar in deontological tone to the position on abortion, the lack of specific scripture references in the IVF statement is conspicuous, as is the introduction of further diverse methods of moral reasoning, such as a concern for motivation and consequences, which did not appear to feature in the drafting of the ACC's abortion statement. What emerges clearly in the IVF paper is a cultural ideal regarding "the family" which seems to hold significant sway in this discussion. This cultural ideal is not problematic in and of itself, but a clear understanding of the rationale might illuminate the argumentation more clearly. The inclusion of personal conscience, miraculous healing, prayer, and conviction, as morally significant is a clear example of an eclectic approach to ethics. For example, there is not any comment as to how conscience might relate to any other sources of moral authority. Even the inclusion of an ad hoc "Protestant" theological source, like Calvin, might supply confidence that the relationship between the two had been at least considered. These dynamics are indicative of the moral tendencies arising from the holiness tradition while juxtaposed against the firm deontological underpinnings of the statement on abortion. In statements that one might expect to find some consistency of moral reasoning, the divided appeal to elements of distinct moral traditions within pentecostal history is striking.

2.3 Sexuality

Having considered the statements broadly categorised into the issues of human life, I now address the statements on sexual ethics. The subject of human sexuality is elaborated three times across consecutive positional papers written over a twenty-three-year period and much of the same subject matter is discussed. The most recent paper reads like a realignment and nuancing of positions outlined in the earlier statements.

2.3.1 Homosexuality and Lesbianism, 1992

The earliest paper is broken down into four subsections. The first focuses on the New Testament; the second, on the Old Testament; and the third on the idea of "Chosen Behaviour". The final section is a summary of the ACC's conception of a "Christian Attitude". Therefore, I will begin exploring the ACC's biblical reasoning regarding homosexuality, followed by the arguments they use that resonate with natural law ethics. Finally, I will summarise their position on the how the churches should respond, and then address the two documents published in 2007 and 2015, respectively.

2.3.1.1 The Bible and Homosexuality

The ACC's approach to sexuality is generally deontological, including references to passages in Romans 1, 1 Corinthians 6, and 1 Timothy 1, and to various Old Testament prohibitions.[45] They write that "the scripture clearly forbids the Christian to engage in or practice any form of homosexuality or lesbianism, and we oppose the legalization of homosexuality".[46] This statement is interesting as it highlights the objection to homosexuality more broadly, and seems to expect the ACC to oppose the normalisation of homosexual behaviour that may occur by dismantling state legislation that criminalises homosexual practice.[47] There seems to be a leap from an "ethical norm" to a legal injunction, again pointing out the tension between apolitical holiness and political morality. This leap is possibly because the ACC are conflating morality and legality as there is no documented evidence elsewhere indicating that the ACC propose legal injunctions against all immoral behaviour. If the ACC remain separatist on some issues and not on

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[45] Australian Christian Churches, "A Statement on Homosexuality and Lesbianism," 1992, 1, accessed August 2015, http://www.acc.org.au/. See Appendix D.

[46] Ibid., 2.

[47] To contextualise this, it should be noted that homosexuality has been legal in Australia since the states, one by one (excluding Tasmania), decriminalised sexual activity between consenting males between 1976 and 1990. The state laws were then ratified by a federal Act, which upheld the privacy of consenting adults engaging in sexual activity. Australasian Legal Information Institute, "*Human Rights (Sexual Conduct) Act 1994*—Sect. 4," University of Technology Sydney and University of New South Wales Faculties of Law, accessed October 24, 2016, https://www.guttmacher.org/about. See also the Act of the Australian Parliament itself: https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2004A04852.

others, it is not clear where or why those lines are drawn, given that they have not articulated a public or political theology.

2.3.1.2 Homosexuality and Natural Law

A key component of the ACC's opposition to homosexuality is their appeal to a further argument to verify the biblical injunctions noted above—a hybrid of consequentialism and natural law.[48] For example, "Biologically God did not create the human body for homosexual activity. It's an abuse to the body. Homosexual activity is unhygienic as can be seen in the high rates of infection with, and the transmission of AIDS amongst those who practice homosexuality".[49] This appeal to the law of nature, or as defined by Scott Rae as "tied to what is natural in creation",[50] without referring to special revelation, indicates that the objection to homosexuality is not simply prohibited scripturally, but should also make sense of and demonstrate its integrity by appealing to biology.[51]

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[48] It is important to note at this point that the ACC have not articulated a particularly nuanced understanding of natural law. Moreover, it is possible that they do not mean "natural law" in terms of the Thomist tradition, for which see Thomas Aquinas, *Treatise on Law: "Summa Theologica," Questions 90–97*, ed. Ralph M. McInerny (Washington DC: Regnery, 1996), 60–61. But probably the ACC use the term to communicate what they believe to be "natural". Therefore, Charles Curran argues that while "[m]any thinkers have referred to natural law, […] by no means have they always meant the same thing by it. In addition, they often came to different conclusions about what the natural law called for in human conduct". The only tradition in which "natural law" exists as an established theological notion is Catholicism. Charles E. Curran, *The Development of Moral Theology: Five Strands* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013), 73–74.

[49] Australian Christian Churches, "Homosexuality and Lesbianism," 2.

[50] Rae, *Moral Choices*, 54.

[51] The ACC do not elaborate on specific sex acts, but it would be interesting to know whether they consistently apply the biological principle. Homosexual acts may well not foster procreation, but many of the sexual acts that take place in the context of a heterosexual relationship do not necessarily lead to procreation. Incidentally, Catholicism grounds its sexual and reproductive ethics on procreative ends, which is why it maintains a position against both contraception and abortion, as well as its position on marriage and sexual intercourse. While many may find the Catholic arguments impractical, their consistency cannot be faulted. It is also inaccurate to assert homosexuality as the unique cause of sexually transmitted diseases. Promiscuous heterosexual intercourse also results in sexually transmitted disease

The ACC's perspective on the family is raised in its observation that homosexuality threatens the ideal model of familial relationships: "Homosexuality violates God's plan and provision of the family".[52] The positional paper also appeals to reason and makes psychological assertions regarding homosexuality: "Homosexuality is a chosen behaviour. It is a choice not a natural, biological, hormonal or genetically governed behaviour. Despite a multitude of theories attempting to associate homosexual behaviour with genetics or the composition of the brain, no conclusive evidence has yet been presented".[53] These bold assertions indicate that biological determinism would hold moral significance in this conversation; moreover, assuming that the ACC would value such scientific input on this matter, they do not reference other relevant disciplines such as psychology.[54]

2.3.1.3 The Church's Response

The ACC prescribed some potential responses to homosexuality for the church back in the 1990s that included their attitude toward homosexuals: firstly, "God love[s] the homosexual despite their sin and he is willing to forgive the homosexual and change them. The gospel is particularly relevant to the homosexual and the lesbian".[55] This response is theologically grounded on the arguments above, which determine that homosexuality is a sin in need of atonement. Secondly, they take a stance of compassion toward those who are suffering from AIDS as a result of their homosexual practice: "We advocate a compassionate ministry to those who suffer AIDS as we attempt to show them God's love, his message of salvation, his healing and our concern for their suffering".[56]

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transmission, which does not discriminate based on orientation. Furthermore, people in monogamous relationships are unlikely to contract infections sexually, nor are women in lesbian relationships.

[52] Australian Christian Churches, "Homosexuality and Lesbianism," 2.

[53] Ibid.

[54] However, it should be recognised that nineteen years previously, the ACC's position in some ways aligned with the historical medical establishment, which up until 1973 classified homosexuality as a disease. Michael Kirby, "The 1973 Deletion of Homosexuality as a Psychiatric Disorder: 30 Years On," *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* 37, no. 6 (2003): 674–77.

[55] Australian Christian Churches, "Homosexuality and Lesbianism," 2.

[56] Ibid.

(Notwithstanding the fact that AIDS affects people outside of the homosexual community). Thirdly, they determine homosexuality to be incompatible with Christianity, taking the position that the homosexual can only accept Christ in the context of abandoning their homosexuality. "We advocate counselling of homosexuals to help them abandon their practice of homosexuality and accept Christ."[57] They have not, in their documentation, explicitly addressed the contemporary distinctions made between orientation and practice.

While they have not referred to the "moral fibre" idea in this statement, they do introduce it in a follow up statement fifteen years later. This document was intended to replace the 1992 paper on "Homosexuality and Lesbianism".

2.3.2 Human Sexuality, 2007

In 2007 the ACC published a new positional paper titled "Human Sexuality". It includes similar sections to the previous statement, including one on the New Testament and Old Testament, followed by a supplementary section with commentary on marriage and family, civil unions, and pornography.

The renaming of this statement to "Human Sexuality" indicated that the ACC were going to explore some of the issues more broadly and generically. Despite this rebranding, the moral authority in these issues remains the biblical text and they frame their generic methodological approach as follows: "The Bible makes it clear that certain behaviour is unacceptable to God and harmful to us. This is true for all of us, whatever our personal preferences, social norms or cultural practices".[58] Additionally, the reference to harm also indicates sensitivity to consequences, although clearly in their thinking the argument is biblically informed. They also broaden and generalise their approach to sexual activity by framing the discussion in the context of marriage. The ACC do not proscribe specific forms of sexual activity within marriage, which is not to say that certain sexual acts, such as rape, are validated in the context of marriage: "Any sexual activity outside this Biblical model

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[57] Ibid.

[58] Australian Christian Churches, "Statement on Human Sexuality," 2007, 1, accessed November 6, 2015, http://www.acc.org.au/. See Appendix E.

of marriage is considered to be immoral".[59] This statement exempts the ACC from any accusation that they are targeting homosexual activity specifically, which was explicitly the case in the original 1992 positional paper.

One of the most significant departures from the original statement is the ACC's new distinction between orientation and practice. "However, we need to distinguish between a person's identity and activity. There is a great deal of difference between a homosexual preference and homosexual practice." This is the first time the ACC have explicitly recognised this distinction and it is the latter they perceive as problematic. "People may argue about how easy it is to choose or change our sexual preference, but we can definitely choose our sexual behaviour."[60] The general perspective being supported here is that the ACC no longer condemn homosexuality as an orientation but object only to homosexual activity.

Also included is the topic of same-sex "marriage". They preface their comments with a general perspective on the importance of marriage in Australian society: "Marriage and the families that ensue from them make up the fabric of our communities, and we believe, as would most Australians, that this is something worth nurturing and safeguarding".[61] Then, turning to the topic of same-sex marriages: "Same sex unions so closely mimic marriage that they threaten to undermine the majority held view that marriage is something that takes place between a man and a woman".[62]

2.3.3 Human Sexuality, 2015

Eight years later, in 2015, the ACC released a third document on sexuality, and it reads very differently from the original statement released over twenty years previously, indicating an evolution of the ACC's position. Consequently, the paper is broken down differently, beginning with a section on "Current Social Opinion", followed by a "Theological Basis for the Movement's Position". They then summarise three relevant

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[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid., 2.

[62] Ibid.

positions on marriage, singleness, and homosexuality. The statement concludes with a section that addresses pastoral questions.

They recognise that the Bible does not directly speak about the complexity of sexual ethics in a statement referring to sexual and gender diversity. "It does not specifically address the diverse sexual orientations and behaviours and gender identities that are included in the LGBTI groupings. However, it is clear that the Bible does not condone or encourage such orientations and behaviours."[63] The ACC also write that "The Christian understanding of human sexuality as an expression of the Creator's intent is derived primarily from the Bible. Australian Christian Churches views the Bible as God's Word to humankind and the normative and authoritative basis for opinions and statements concerning human sexuality".[64] They remain consistent in their understanding that the purpose of sexuality is derived "primarily" from the Bible, but they also invoke an understanding of gender that arguably has some common ground with natural law ethics.[65] "Therefore, sexual activity should be in accordance with God's intention as revealed in the Bible. The biblical portrayal of human sexuality is based on the understanding that we are created male or female in the image of God and that the union of husband and wife in marriage is the appropriate relationship for sexual activity."[66] They then proceed to prescribe one form of sexual relationship as biblically grounded—a monogamous heterosexual relationship—and encourage chastity in relationships outside of this model. "The consistent biblical ideal for sexual experience is chastity for those outside of a monogamous heterosexual marriage and fidelity for those within such a marriage. Human sexual relationships are to be monogamous and heterosexual."[67] These conclusions have not necessarily changed, but the recognition that while the Bible may be pre-eminent in the ACC's methodology, it is not necessarily exhaustive. For example, in highlighting fidelity and chastity as two principles (or virtues) to be celebrated in the

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[63] Australian Christian Churches, "Positional Statement: Human Sexuality," 2015, 3, accessed December 15, 2015, http://www.acc.org.au/. See Appendix F.

[64] Ibid., 2.

[65] This highlights another example where "natural law" is cited as an authority but with no theological integrity. Again, what is probably meant in this case is that homosexuality is unnatural, or against nature.

[66] Australian Christian Churches, "Positional Statement: Human Sexuality," 1.

[67] Ibid.

context of human sexuality, the ACC's tone has migrated somewhat across the years. This later statement in particular reads less legalistically and as less "evangelical" and has adopted a tone more aligned with the holiness and virtue narratives described in chapter 1.

2.3.3.1 Commentary on Secularism

In the 2015 statement, the ACC also engage for the first time with the cultural shifts that have influenced sexual ethics, indicated initially in their statement regarding the Bible's primacy, but not necessarily exclusively. In so doing they are recognising that culture impacts on the moral narrative in the church as well as in society. "The Christian understanding of human sexuality is challenged by the contemporary secular view that sexual behaviour is one of many activities in which humans engage. Detached from Christian morality, sexual activity is viewed as a vehicle for the expression of the individual."[68] Highlighting the individualistic nature of secular culture, and therefore an underpinning bias toward sexual individualism, they acknowledge that society views marriage "as desirable, [but] it is portrayed as an option rather than as the appropriate relationship within which to conduct a loving partnership and raise children".[69] Interestingly they encourage Christians to have a public voice on this issue, echoing the 1992 statement endorsing the legislative opposition to liberalising sexuality laws. "Christians are responsible to bring biblical truth to decisions concerning human sexuality."[70] In some cases this politically activist position is sustained, particularly, it would seem, regarding same-sex marriage. "Christians should be willing to publicly oppose social mores and legislation that impinge upon the Christian view of marriage and sexual behaviour."[71]

While the ACC tend to lean toward the Bible as their primary authority, periodically they refer to other disciplines and sources. This shift is codified in their statement above. Whereas in 1992 they asserted that homosexuality is chosen, it seems

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[68] Ibid., 2.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid., 4.

that in the most recent statement they concede that same-sex attraction might not be simply a matter of choice. "It is likely that, in some cases, homosexuality can be linked to psychological and environmental factors."[72]

2.3.3.2 Pastoral Responses and Distinctions

The pastoral responses to homosexuality have also been developed in this iteration. The ACC recognise that, as sexual beings, humans are to a greater or lesser degree influenced by their sexuality, ideally expressed in the context of marriage. "Human beings are created male or female in the image of God with a need for companionship and intimacy that is satisfied in the loving relationship of marriage."[73] Outside of this ideal, "we are to abstain from sexual immorality and homosexual behaviour".[74] The line of reasoning is that while sexuality is a powerful human attribute, it is nevertheless subject to higher human goods such as the worship of God. "While the Bible celebrates sexual union within marriage, it does not view sexual activity as the highest human good. It is more important to be devoted to God and singleness can be seen as a gift and a calling. Our ultimate human fulfilment does not exist in sexual relationship but in knowing God."[75] This fulfilment, in the eyes of the ACC, transcends all types of sexual desire. They seem to recognise the high standard by reminding readers that "single people are not asexual and must deal with their sexual drives".[76] Nevertheless, they are promoting a view that there is more to one's life than one's sexuality. Given this reasoning is not reliant on literal readings of the Bible and obedience, the overall arguments appear to be commensurate with the holiness tradition and its different emphasis on virtue.

When dealing with sexuality in a pastoral context, they are clearly not intending to denigrate or insult those for whom sexuality is a personal issue. "In addressing the issue of homosexuality it is essential to affirm that every person, no matter their sexual orientation or behaviour, is loved by God and therefore deserving of respect, compassion

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[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid., 2.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid., 3.

[76] Ibid.

and understanding."[77] Referring back to their biblical position, the ACC recognise a distinction between orientation and practice, as outlined in the 2007 document. "In accepting the biblical position we can distinguish between a homosexual orientation toward persons of the same sex and homosexual behaviour."[78] As a priority, the ACC want to ensure that individuals who are affected by this issue are engaged sensitively. "Churches should combine avoidance of condemnation of the individual with teaching and assistance in correction and lifestyle adjustment. Christian teaching should emphasize the power of divine grace to change fallen human nature and behaviour."[79]

2.3.4 Summary of Statements: Sexuality

The uniqueness of these positions is not the "biblical absolutist" nature of the ethics employed, but the ACC's absolutism regarding their absolutism. So much so, they seem to make the case that, so clear is the Bible on this issue, that they are also willing to take a legal position, as well as a moral one. These statements also introduce a new type of reasoning not clearly seen in earlier documents, natural law ethics (or at least a law of nature). While still a type of deontology, allowing for the invocations of principles, it is used to strengthen the position already articulated throughout the Scriptures. Natural Law is used in conjunction with consequentialist arguments as well as the appeals to "family structures" that did emerge in the statements on human life. Clearly this issue is so significant to the ACC that they are willing to deploy as many ethical arguments as possible without mentioning some of the more subjectivist methodologies, such as prayer and conscience, that have previously appeared in the analysis of abortion and IVF. The ACC are silent on "following your conscience" or discerning the will of God in a particular case when it comes to sexuality, except insofar as it there may be a choice between single or married life, both of which must be chaste. Although the silence is sustained throughout the twenty-three-year publication period, evidently the ACC have reflected on at least some of their methodologies and taken the time to articulate some methodological nuance, particularly the recognition that attraction itself is not sinful,

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[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid., 4.

even if their overall positions have not changed. Furthermore, the latest statement demonstrates some evolution in emphasis, from scriptural obedience (and to a lesser extent, self-evident biological truths) to a commitment to the kind of sexual ethics becoming of the Christian life, that is, a holy and virtuous sexuality. But absent are any guiding methodological principles; and, given the political sensitivity of this issue, it is impossible to determine whether the development was driven by social expediency or theological reflection.

2.4 Community Challenges

A third collection of issues is now assessed, including community challenges such as pornography and gambling. These are not as easily grouped as the first two themes, but nevertheless they assist in comprehending some of the ACC's ethical method, as it pertains to moral issues that affect both the church and the broader community. The documents include two on pornography, one on gambling and finally the ACC's marriage and divorce policy.

2.4.1 Pornography, 1993

The ACC's statement on pornography is more simplistic and shorter than the previous statements, and organised into three sections: "A Biblical Perspective", "Social Consequences", and "Recommendations". In taking a firm moral stance against pornography, they suggest that the rise in pornographic consumption is a consequence of societal degradation, inclusive of moral standards and sexual crime in general. "We believe that a continuing lack of standards will cause an increase of sexual crimes and the further deterioration of our society."[80] The statement concludes with two directives advising believers in their public engagement of this issue. "We advise believers to oppose the further lowering of standards that will permit an increase of pornography wherever encountered."[81] And secondly, "We advise believers to lobby their political and community leaders to eliminate pornography from our society so that its destructive

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[80] Australian Christian Churches, "A Statement on Pornography," 1993, 1, accessed November 2015, http://www.acc.org.au/. See Appendix G.

[81] Ibid., 2.

influence may be removed".[82] Despite their lack of biblical references, the tenor of their arguments demonstrates that the ACC are very concerned about this issue and communicates a strong principle-based orientation against pornography, with an acknowledgement of the harms that may result, signalling again an awareness of moral consequences and their capacity to inform ethical decision-making. Furthermore, it seems that whenever the ACC's concern for "community moral fibre" arises, so does an attendant "call to public action".

Like the issue of sexuality, the ethical context of pornography has shifted dramatically in the last twenty years, including dimensions such as accessibility, legality, abuse, and intensity. The ACC address some of these shifts in a revised statement and explore this issue in much more depth.

2.4.2 Pornography, 2016

The 2016 paper on pornography begins with an overview of the current social opinion and is followed by a "Theological Basis for Movement's Position". Given much of this section is an exploration of Scripture, I will begin with this analysis and then summarise the paper's focus on pornography as a social justice issue. The statement concludes by addressing important pastoral questions and this analysis will do the same.

2.4.2.1 Pornography and Scripture

In this revision, the ACC recognise that the Bible does not speak to the issue specifically, a similar shift in nuance to other statements contemporary to this revision. They argue that "it is unrealistic to expect the Bible to directly address the issues of pornographic images. However, what is clearly addressed is sexual immorality".[83] Sexual immorality is of course broad and nonspecific, but they cite ancillary Scriptures that speak about related issues, such as lust, objectification, and adultery. "Lust is a fundamental component of pornography and is clearly forbidden in scripture. (Proverbs 6:25)";[84] and "scripture

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[82] Ibid.

[83] Australian Christian Churches, "Positional Statement: Pornography," 2016, 2, accessed April 20, 2016, http://www.acc.org.au/. See Appendix H.

[84] Ibid., 3.

clearly teaches that sexual immorality has an effect on the individual. (1 Corinthians 6:15–20)".[85] Needless to say, the ACC do not seem to require particular Scriptures to arbitrate on moral issues, suggesting there are other dynamics informing their moral assessment.

The most significant theological theme for this moral discussion is the affront to the *imago Dei*—a recurring line of argument in the ACC literature. They argue that "Humankind is created in the image of God and to display the human form for no other purpose than sexual gratification is to abuse the sanctity of the human body".[86] As demonstrated in the sexuality documents, humans as sexual beings can also have their sexuality marred and distorted. Resonant with their earlier statement which revealed a sensitivity to outcomes, and this time including possible virtue language, the ACC argue that pornography "attacks and distorts human sexuality by depersonalizing sexual activity and emphasizing the gratification of selfish desires to the neglect of loving, committed relationships".[87]

2.4.2.2 Social Justice

Indicative of an expanding moral vision, the ACC shift from an exclusive focus on the consumer of pornography and explore in more detail the broader and connected community and social issues, including those persons objectified and in some cases exploited by this industry. As part of their argument regarding objectification, they also argue that "Pornography is often linked with prostitution, sexual abuse and other forms of sexual exploitation and harms the most vulnerable in our society".[88] They also raise the issue of childhood and early sexualisation: "There is a growing body of evidence that premature exposure to sexualized images and adult sexual content has a negative impact on the psychological development of children".[89] This perspective is supported by referencing the Australian Medical Association, which has "expressed concerns about pornography and the sexualization of children and has called for further research to be

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[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid., 1.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid., 2.

conducted".[90] This argument is another example of the ACC exploring reasoning outside of the Scriptures and church tradition to make moral judgements. Although this inclusion could indicate methodological consideration on the ACC's part, without a specific defence, it appears ad hoc and rhetorical rather than theologically validated. Their arguments are further supported by recognising the profit motive behind the industry and the various forms of exploitation that occur because of it. "Pornography as an industry is first and foremost about making money. The evidence of that is the worldwide multi-billion-dollar industry. It is exploitative of the vulnerable, the poor, children, animals and the addicted."[91]

2.4.2.3 Pastoral Responses

Because pornography is a prevalent problem as well as addictive—"Pornography is known to be addictive causing serious problems in the personal life of those addicted to pornography"[92]—it is just as much a pastoral concern as it is a moral one. The response of the church should be one of compassion, as the ACC note from Jesus' interaction with the woman caught in adultery. "Those caught up in pornography are not disposable but valuable."[93] The seriousness of the issue is also recognised as it has a broader social impact, not just regarding the sex industry but also regarding marriages, families, and a host of other unfortunate consequences. This recognition of communal interconnectivity is much more advanced and clearer in this statement than in earlier statements.

Given broader social impact, the ACC have therefore taken an eclectic approach when dealing with congregation members involved in the various strata of this issue. "Those who are struggling with pornography, as either a producer or consumer of the product, require pastoral care and support. In some situations, specialist support and counselling should be provided. They are like the woman caught in the act of adultery; she was counselled and supported to sin no more."[94]

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[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid., 3.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Ibid., 4.

2.4.3 Gambling, 2016

The 2016 position paper on gambling begins, outlining some social context before it explains the ACC's theological position. Like the other papers published in 2016, it concludes with a section on "Pastoral Questions".

Gambling is one of many moral issues that is not directly addressed in Scripture; however, the ACC appeal to Scriptures that speak around the challenges often associated with gambling, and to social evidence.[95] "The scriptural and social evidence is clear."[96] As well as appealing to Scriptures regarding greed and self interest ("The Bible opposes greed and self interest"[97]) and stewardship ("Biblical stewardship (Gen 1:28) indicates that we are responsible for the resources that God has placed under our control"[98]), there is great emphasis placed on the community issues that stem from or are related to problem gambling. It is also noteworthy that the moral argumentation includes reference to both the cultivation and devolution of "character" grounded on biblical virtues. Furthermore, consequences are also raised: "Gambling does not only affect the individual but affects the whole family. For every problem gambler there is another five to ten [victims]".[99] This perspective challenges the socially popular individualism that sees each human as isolated and responsible only to themselves. Gambling "is not a victimless activity".[100]

Even if the individual who engages in this activity is the person primarily affected, the ACC highlight the scope of the problems that it can cause: "Harm to the problem gambler and their family, mental and physical health problems. Difficulty in maintaining employment and struggling to maintain personal relationships. For many families, perhaps the biggest loss is the quality of time together, which can never be recovered. Gamblers are six times more likely than non-gamblers to get divorced. Gamblers are four

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[95] "Australians have the highest level of gambling per capita in the world." Australian Christian Churches, "Positional Statement: Gambling," 2016, 1, accessed April 20, 2016, http://www.acc.org.au/. See Appendix I.

[96] Ibid., 2.

[97] Ibid., 3.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Ibid.

[100] Ibid., 4.

times more likely to suffer from alcohol abuse".[101] There is a resurgence in the emphasis on family in this positional paper as the ACC highlight the tragedy of family breakdown and the interconnectedness of moral and social issues.

They continue to broaden the discussion by addressing the global impact of gambling: "to identify this problem only with the small percentage of problem gamblers in Australia is to dramatically underestimate the overall social and spiritual impact of gambling on society as a whole".[102] Additionally there is a problem with its purposelessness: "Gambling has no moral, spiritual, financial or other qualities that make it a purposeful or meaningful pursuit. The genuine artist, entertainer or athlete provides entertainment based on an exceptional representation of the image of God in humanity".[103] This vantage point is an interesting one to take, indicating that activities void of purpose are not simply amoral, but potentially morally problematic.

An additional consequentialist line of argument is considered when the ACC cite addiction as an issue pertaining to gambling. "If a person views it as a form of entertainment, then they are at risk of becoming one of the many that are entrapped by gambling as an addiction. Just because an individual believes they can afford to gamble and it is a legal pursuit, does not mean it is without harm."[104] The fine line between pastime/entertainment and addicitve behaviour is re-emphasised. "Gambling has the potential to be highly addictive. The destructive impact of gambling addiction on individuals and families, as well as its costs to society, is well documented. Just because something is lawful does not mean that it is meaningful or useful. Just because something has the ability to distract a person from the reality of their current situation (be entertained) does not mean that it is beneficial in the long term."[105]

As a final critique, the ACC explain the problematic nature of economics and corporate greed, which "without conscience play you [to] extinction",[106] draining the gambler of all his or her resources without concern.

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[101] Ibid., 2.

[102] Ibid., 1.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid., 4.

[105] Ibid., 1.

[106] Ibid., 2.

2.4.4 Divorce and Remarriage, 2007

The third paper included in this category is the ACC's positions on divorce and remarriage. This paper is more of a policy statement designed to give the ACC guidelines around how to respond practically to the reality of divorce within the church; nevertheless, it includes some helpful moral content that locates the ACC's approach. It begins by outlining the ACC's view on marriage, which is followed by a consideration of the circumstances in which divorce might be permitted.[107] The topic of remarriage is then addressed and the guidelines prescribing when a minister might support and officiate at a remarriage ceremony are presented. The policy document concludes with the matter of the ordination of ministers who might be divorced and subsequently remarried. As this chapter is focused on the ethical issues, I will first address divorce and then remarriage in this analysis.

2.4.4.1 Divorce and the Bible

Much of the material in this positional paper refers directly to biblical injunctions regarding marriage and (generally) prohibitions regarding divorce. "Divorce is the very last option, not the first resort."[108] The ACC recognise that while there might be specific exceptions that fall outside of the general rules against divorce, they are opposed to it. Some of the exceptions noted include adultery: "Jesus, in his answer to the Pharisees' question, permitted divorce because of the sexual immorality clause as found in Deuteronomy 24:1".[109] They further explain, however, that "these grounds for divorce need to be understood in the context of the biblical emphasis on grace that empowers forgiveness, and reconciliation".[110] This statement indicates that while the ACC might excuse divorce in the case of adultery, they would not mandate it if there is appropriate forgiveness and healing. The "Scripture-centric" nature of these arguments is a helpful

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[107] For reference, the ACC identifies some of these key elements of a marriage: "A public exchange of vows, sexual intimacy and loving care." Australian Christian Churches, "Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage Policy," 2007, 2, accessed April 2015, http://www.acc.org.au/. See Appendix J.

[108] Ibid., 3.

[109] Ibid., 2.

[110] Ibid., 3.

reminder that some of the ACC's uncompromising positions are very much based on biblical injunctions, and that "exceptions to the rule", as in the case of some marital circumstances, are also justified, in their minds, through Scripture.

In keeping with the principle that divorce is never something to be celebrated but something to be pursued only as a last resort, the ACC state that "Any divorce that falls outside of the biblical guidelines, and occurred after conversion, is to be regarded as unbiblical (without cause) and a sinful act".[111] Given that the ACC place a high value on family life, marriage, children, etc., as evidenced in the previous positional papers, they see divorce as one of the more problematic threats to family life. The narrow prescriptions on this topic indicate that the ACC are primarily concerned with the biblical instruction about divorce and marriage and are very much leaning on Scripture to provide guidance in these situations. Where the issue gets more complex and requires interpretation and nuance is the ACC's approach to remarriage after divorce.

2.4.4.2 Remarriage

The way the ACC address remarriage is to recognise distinctions between the various divorce parties. Firstly, there is the case of those who have participated in a valid biblical divorce (presumably referring to divorce sought as a response to adultery). Whether one has initiated the divorce or not, the ACC permit remarriage providing one is not culpable for the adultery. "Where a divorce has occurred that falls within the Biblical guidelines referred to above, the person who has not caused the divorce is free to remarry with a clear conscience before God."[112] The reference to conscience here is clearly different from the use of conscience in the IVF positional paper. For IVF, conscience operates as a medium through which ethical decisions can be deliberated, but for remarriage, it functions as a simple descriptor for "free from guilt". Given that there is not a revision of the IVF paper contemporary to this statement on divorce, the different understandings of conscience would benefit from some definitional clarity.

Secondly, there are those persons who have been divorced for nonbiblical reasons, but who have been the victim rather than the instigator of the divorce. In

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[111] Ibid., 4.

[112] Ibid.

essence, the divorce was forced upon him or her for reasons outside of his or her control. The ACC state: "The person who has been divorced invalidly, is also free to remarry under certain circumstances: Where the previous spouse does not want reconciliation or has remarried".[113] If there is any hope of reconciliation in the initial marriage, the ACC clearly favour restoring the integrity of the first marriage, rather than allowing a second marriage to take place. Their view on the sanctity of marriage is nevertheless expressed overtly in their position on remarriage (despite the circumstances): "Where the previous spouse has remarried, nothing should be done to undermine that marriage".[114]

Thirdly, the statement deals with the requirements and validity regarding the remarriage of ministers. As this is more of an issue of church practice, it will not be explored in the same detail, other than to recognise that ministers actively use their discernment and conscience to make moral judgements about situations within which they are pastorally involved. To this the ACC respond, "each case should be viewed on its merit".[115] This method has its strengths: excusing the church from taking a "one size fits all" approach and reckoning with care and discernment the complexities of each case. The challenges however also include the lack of clarity and guidance around the variables, leaving the decision-makers none the wiser regarding the specific circumstances in which a remarriage would be allowed or prohibited.

A further generic instruction is issued with regard to any Christian seeking marriage, whether that one be single, divorced, or widowed: "When Paul writes about Christian widows remarrying, he makes it clear that they should only marry a Christian".[116] Furthermore, ACC ministers are discouraged from ever advocating divorce unless there is a danger to either or both the spouses: "A minister should rarely, if ever, advocate divorce, even if there are clear grounds for it. The only exception would be when a person is endanger[ed] by remaining in the marriage relationship".[117] The position that divorce be the last resort for resolving marital conflict is upheld in their statement that "Even in this

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[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Ibid., 5.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid., 6.

circumstance, the minister should initially recommend professional counselling and separation, and not divorce".[118] This advice indicates a strong commitment to prohibiting divorce in the framework articulated in Scripture with very little deviation. The clear preference for biblical absolutism and strong deontological argumentation is possibly based on the perception that such questions are directly and unambiguously addressed in the Bible.

Furthermore, if divorce is eventually sanctioned, then remarriage remains a distinct ethical question subject to the stipulations outlined above and further deviations would require the implementation of ethical reasoning beyond scriptural sanctions and prohibitions. For example, ministers are encouraged to exercise their own conscience when involved with the remarriage of divorcees. This use of the term, "conscience" is a return to the previous use in the IVF statement. "Ministers of the movement are not required to perform any marriages where their conscience prevents them from doing so."[119] While this advice does not specifically name remarriages, in the context of the positional statement it is clear that the ACC place trust in the minister's discernment and that when read alongside the other principles invoked in these arguments, their ministers are encouraged to avoid dealing with the remarriage of divorcees in almost all cases. Although they have not defined or expanded upon discernment, it would not be a far cry to assume that part of the pentecostal rationale for this includes a receptivity to the voice of the Holy Spirit commensurate with their holiness, rather than their evangelical history.

Part of the concern over ministers presiding over remarriages is the perception that a minister may be overlooking an adulterous affair that led to the initial divorce. "Conducting such a ceremony would appear to condone their sin of adultery. Consideration may be given if the adulterous affair occurred pre-conversion and/or if there are children resulting from the relationship."[120] This argument is also the first time that children are mentioned in the statement, which overlooks what appears to be one of the ACC's primary concerns in their other positions on abortion and IVF. There are certainly strong consequentialist arguments that tie divorce into the overall flourishing of

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[118] Ibid.

[119] Ibid., 5.

[120] Ibid., 7.

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the family, and the integrity of the family unit as enunciated in other position statements. But for marriage and divorce, the consequentialist dimensions are eclipsed by the deontological ones.

2.4.5 Summary of Statements: Community Challenges

This group of statements, more so than those on either human life or sexuality, utilise various forms of consequentialist methodologies as their primary mode of argumentation— particularly sensitivity toward consequences that appear to exacerbate social harms. While some of the ACC's positions are still supported by biblical references and principles, many of the driving arguments seem to be teleological in nature. It is possible that this is due to the communal nature of the issues being considered, but given no rationale is articulated, such a suggestion is purely hypothetical. This presumption brings the challenge back to the lack of, firstly, an articulated methodology, and secondly, a consistent approach across the breadth of the statements.

The exception to the consequentialist leaning of these statements is the paper on marriage and divorce, where the only consequence that seems to be of ethical concern is the minister's association with officiating at a wedding of a divorcee whose past may be tarnished by adultery. A considered approach to the use of conscience is also lacking, not because it should not assume a place in moral discourse, but because the ACC's overall deontological priority steers away from the potential individualism propagated using conscience in ethics.

Overall, the ethics that is articulated in this group of statements is biblically grounded from a conservative perspective, but includes additional modes of reasoning. Questions with clear biblical answers, as far as the ACC are concerned, are addressed deontologically; however, as the Bible becomes less clear, additional methodologies, such as consequentialism and conscience, are employed. Given the focus on social harms, it is interesting that the holiness-orientated pursuit of virtue is not also highlighted as a potential solution. Instead, prohibitions are described in light of consequentialist readings, indicating a more evangelical approach to morality rather than a transformational one.

2.5 Social Justice

The issues of community concern above can be considered matters of personal ethics, insofar as the focus seems to be on the individual divorcee, gambler, or pornography user. The following two issues are also significant community-orientated challenges but they are often discussed at a macro level and I have therefore categorised them as issues of social justice. They include asylum seekers and poverty.

2.5.1 Asylum Seekers and Immigration, 2016

The ACC's writing on asylum seekers and refugees begins with some background and context to the immigration challenges in Australia as well as relevant scripture references. This is followed by a paragraph defending their position theologically and a section including further comment on migration and asylum seekers. They conclude with a paragraph covering pastoral questions and responses. I will structure my analysis beginning with the ACC's theological argumentation, followed by a review of their approach to public engagement on this issue.

2.5.1.1 Ethnicity and Culture

Before the mechanics and policy-orientated discussion are explored, there are some grounding theological principles that have informed the ACC's positions on this subject. Beginning with scripture references, they outline the migration history of ancient Israel and the circumstantial solidarity between modern refugees and the plight of the people of God in the Old Testament. "God instructed the ancient Israelites to 'love the stranger for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.' And also, to 'treat foreigners residing among you as native-born'".[121] Furthermore the ACC "recognises that every person is made in the image of God, including each asylum seeker, refugee or other migrant." The ACC writes that "[E]ach individual deserves to be treated with dignity, [and] respect".[122] The

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[121] Australian Christian Churches, "Positional Statement: Immigration and Asylum Seekers," 2016, 3, accessed May 11, 2016, http://www.acc.org.au/. See Appendix K.

[122] Ibid., 1. These categories of persons are related but different. Asylum Seekers are those who are seeking protection and are yet to have their claims to refugee status processed. Refugees are those whose claims to asylum have been granted. Migrants are those who freely choose to migrate. See United Nations High Commission for Refugees, "Asylum-Seekers," 2021, accessed August 18, 2021,

value of human life, grounded in the theological idea of humans created in God's image, is a consistent theme of the positional statements. "The ACC believes that Australia's migration policy should reflect a consistent ethic of life; seeking to protect, preserve and enhance human life at every stage of the migration journey."[123] The clarification at the end of this statement demonstrates a recognition that there are complex and diverse elements to this issue and that consistency is imperative across the various phases of human life.

Given the progression of these arguments, a structure emerges that had not been as clear in previous statements. Starting with a biblical foundation, applying the *imago Dei* theological principle and its integration across ethical issues, and then including commentary on how this principle might be applied demonstrates a coherent flow to the ethical argument—or at least it is more coherent than arguments that had been made in previous papers. Alternatively, the eclectic reasoning could simply be another example of ad hoc argumentation, which consequently undermines any possible purposeful structure.

Maintaining a scriptural approach to each issue, regarding refugees, the ACC cite relatable examples of refugees in the Bible as well as more contemporary examples, "including the family of Jesus fleeing the persecution of Herod. More recently the plight of Jewish refugees being denied shelter from the Holocaust during the Second World War prompted the development of international agencies focused on refugee protection".[124] In this regard the ACC are consistent with biblical principles found in both the Old and

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https://www.unhcr.org/en-au/asylum-seekers.html; United Nations High Commission for Refugees, "What Is a Refugee?," 2021, accessed August 18, 2021, https://www.unhcr.org/en-au/what-is-a-refugee.html.

[123] Australian Christian Churches, "Immigration," 2. This is the first time in the ACC documents that the phrase "consistent ethic of life" has been used. This is likely because often conservatives (both political and religious) are accused of being inconsistent in their approach to moral issues, that is, they are vehemently anti-abortion but seem to show little concern for families who are struggling financially, and often take political positions that oppose social welfare. Catholic Cardinal Bernardin explored this idea in Joseph L. Bernardin, *Consistent Ethic of Life*, ed. Thomas G. Fuechtmann (Kansas City, MO: Sheed and Ward, 1988).

[124] Australian Christian Churches, "Immigration," 2.

New Testaments, such as equality of value, justice, compassion, and hospitality. "Every person is deserving of fairness, justice, community and welcome regardless of their ethnicity, culture, religion or background. There is an undeniable biblical responsibility to love and show compassion for the stranger among us."[125] It is particularly interesting that much of the ACC's discussion on this issue focuses on biblical narrative rather than on biblical injunctions. This is the first positional statement that has been argued from this angle. What undoubtedly remains though is a heavy use of Scriptures, even though the way they are being applied appears to ebb and flow. Given how recent this statement is, it may also demonstrate a shift in biblical hermeneutics, away from literal proof-texting to more complex narrative accounts.[126]

2.5.1.2 Approach to Government Policy

The ACC do not adopt a formulaic approach to government policy, nor do they have historical positions to draw from regarding the asylum seeker issue. Moreover, while refugees are not a new, 21st-century problem, the challenges and ethical issues included in this positional paper are exacerbated by the prominence of asylum seeker and immigration-related narratives in Australia.[127] The statement seems to be responsive to the Australian context, as opposed to a declaration of a timeless and universal position on issues of immigration. In a sense, this paper could be considered reactive, even though it claims to articulate some standardised and general positions on the issue.

The ACC support an immigration system that is both ordered and just: "For the sake of social cohesion and healthy communities, governments must engage their best

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[125] Ibid. For a pentecostal articulation of the theological position on hospitality see Augustine, *Spirit and the Common Good*, 44.

[126] For examples of the pentecostal academy exploring narrative hermeneutics, see Kenneth J. Archer, "Pentecostal Story: The Hermeneutical Filter for the Making of Meaning," *Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 26, no. 1 (2004); Archer, *Pentecostal Hermeneutic*; Grey, *Three's a Crowd*.

[127] For example, see "Q&A: The Abbott Government's Boat Turn-Back Policy," *ABC News*, September 27, 2013, accessed December 17, 2020, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-09-27/q-and-a-abbott-turn-back-boats-policy/4982928; "Is Australia Responsible for Asylum Seekers Detained on Manus Island?," *ABC News*, February 27, 2014, accessed December 17, 2020, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-02-27/who-is-responsible-for-asylum-seekers-detained-on-manus/5275598?nw=0.

efforts to make immigration and settlement both orderly and fair".[128] This petition is made on the basis of concern for community peace and stability, notwithstanding the fact that the concepts of order and fairness are not defined or articulated. At this point it is also worth noting that the statement seems to conflate the global refugee crisis with Australian immigration in general, but if this is the case, the ACC would not be the first voice to truncate these two subjects. Likely in response to government policy regarding the processing of refugees, the ACC state that "Australia must ensure that these checks and processes uphold the dignity and equality of every human being, reflect our values of compassion, kindness and justice and do not treat asylum seekers with less regard or care than any other human being".[129]

The positional statement includes a reference to an authority outside of Scripture— "human rights obligations"—presumably the UN refugee convention, to which Australia is a signatory. "Australia's treatment of asylum seekers should similarly be consistent with Australia's human rights obligations as outlined in the relevant international treaties."[130] This endorsement of secular authorities is surprising given that the ACC are unlikely to support unilaterally everything that the United Nations might suggest in their charters; moreover, the distinctly secular nature of the institution should at least give pause for thought. However, what its inclusion demonstrates is that the ACC are interested in the integrity of the Australian government and the global commitments it has made. Further, they have commented on the vitriolic use of language and historical vilification of refugees within the Australian national debate. Presumably this feedback concerns the consistent use of terminology such as "illegals, queue jumpers, and boat people". Their major argument seems to be concerned with the way the narrative is permeated with language which diminishes human dignity and value. "This includes engagement in national debate to uphold the dignity of people made in the image of God. It further includes an intentional move away from language that seeks to caricature asylum seekers and refugees as the 'unwanted other.'"[131]

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[128] Australian Christian Churches, "Immigration," 2.

[129] Ibid.

[130] Ibid.

[131] Ibid.

The statement concludes with some practical comments relevant to engagement with refugees generally, but it is not prescriptive about supporting specific government policies. The conclusions stand in contrast to the clear direction given by the ACC in their support or rejection of policies regarding human life or sexuality. These positions indicate that the ACC are comfortable instructing their clergy to support or oppose political leaders proactively, based on policy specifics. The apolitical approach taken in the asylum seeker statement is akin to a more separatist ecclesiology, indicating this perspective is inspired, consciously or not, by the holiness traditions as opposed to the evangelical ones. A suggestion included: "A practical way to practice hospitality is to be aware of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers that are living in your area, and consider ways to be of assistance to them and to welcome them into your community".[132] This proposal is indicative of the ACC's understanding of the practical role of the church "on the ground" while concurrently distancing itself from policy specifics. The statement on asylum seekers was composed in 2016, alongside another paper addressing a second global ethical issue: poverty.

2.5.2 Poverty and Injustice, 2016

Like the paper on asylum seekers, the statement on poverty begins with commentary on social opinion and a theological basis for the ACC's position. This is followed by a section on the "eradication of poverty" and a selection of responses to the issue appropriate for pastors and leaders. The following analysis will begin with the theological arguments and then address the social and political concerns raised by the ACC.

2.5.2.1 Theological Approaches

Theologically speaking, many of the positional papers are undergirded by the belief that humans are created in the *imago Dei*. The ACC position on poverty and injustice is no exception. "The Bible emphasizes that all people are made in the image of God and are of equal worth and value. As an expression of our equal worth, God gifted us all with the inalienable right to life, dignity, value, and meaningful participation in stewarding the

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[132] Ibid., 3.

earth he designed to sustain us all."[133] This same reasoning is used in the response to pornography, the sanctity of human life, and refugees. Poverty is seen as another affront to and distortion of the *imago Dei*. Having repeatedly made this anthropological point, the ACC seem to be using the *imago Dei* and the idea of human dignity as interchangeable concepts. "Poverty deprives people of their basic needs and rights, such as food security, clean water, adequate shelter, education, basic health care and security. It further deprives people of their dignity, self-worth and voice; their positive freedoms; meaningful choices and control over their own lives."[134]

Additionally, their emphasis on the *imago Dei* is supported by their reading and understanding of the Bible. "The Christian understanding of the right for each human life to flourish is derived primarily from the Bible. Australian Christian Churches views the Bible as God's Word to humankind and the normative and authoritative basis for opinions and statements concerning human flourishing."[135] It is also on this biblical basis that the ACC elevate poverty as an issue that should be deeply concerning for Christians, both from a justice perspective—"the Bible repeatedly expresses God's heart for the poor and oppressed, and His righteous anger directed to those that exploit or oppress the vulnerable, or enact injustice"[136]—and from a compassion perspective, which "includes embracing the poor among us, ministering to their needs, and defending their rights by addressing the social, economic and political injustices that cause poverty".[137] What stands out in particular is that their argument appears to be primarily grounded on the *imago Dei*, while not referring to the many specific Scriptures that can also provide deontological support for their arguments. The material and social justice focus, as opposed to evangelism, has similarities to the moral trends emerging from Methodism noted earlier.

2.5.2.2 Social Justice and Economics

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[133] Australian Christian Churches, "Positional Statement: Poverty and Injustice," 2016, 1, accessed September 8, 2016, 1, http://www.acc.org.au/. See Appendix L.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Ibid., 2.

[136] Ibid.

[137] Ibid., 1.

Referring to social justice themes common in Luke's Gospel, the ACC present a case for a holistic confrontation of human sin, both personal economic sin: "Christian pastors and leaders can encourage just and righteous living, including ethical business, consumerism and investment to ensure that our lifestyles are not achieved through the inadvertent exploitation of others";[138]and social economic sin: "The gospel message is good news to the whole person as Jesus Christ inaugurated a new kingdom marked by salvation; that is, right relationship with God, and well-being; right relationship with self, others and creation. The gospel message is also good news to the poor as Jesus confronted the exploitation and oppression of the vulnerable and challenged followers to actively engage in the reversal of unjust social structures".[139]

The ACC also recognise that, particularly in the west, consumerism and materialism are rampant and can permeate the church community. "We understand the need to combat the inappropriate consumerist and individualistic tendencies inherent in Western society that are not compatible with the vision for community presented by Jesus Christ. Jesus modelled for us a just, righteous and socially responsible lifestyle of loving all people, tempering self-interests and sharing of our resources with others."[140] The call to self-sacrifice functions to remind those living in prosperity and affluence that self-restraint against indulgence and greed is paramount for those professing the Christian Gospel.

2.5.2.3 Poverty and Social Engagement

Notwithstanding the sometimes legitimate critiques of the prosperity Gospel perpetuated in some pentecostal churches, threads of this "economic theology" are absent from their statements.[141] One of the most striking elements of the ACC's position on poverty is that it addresses a concern that many scholars have raised, that social endeavours are perpetuated for solely evangelistic ends. "These programs should be conducted without

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[138] Ibid., 3.

[139] Ibid., 2.

[140] Ibid.

[141] Warrington notes this in his summary of the "five-fold" Gospel, which includes material blessing. Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 18, 37. For a key proponent of "prosperity theology", see Yonggi Cho, *Five-Fold Gospel and Three-Fold Blessing* (Seoul: Young San, 1983); Yonggi Cho, *Salvation, Health and Prosperity: Our Threefold Blessings in Christ* (Altamonte Springs, FL: Creation House, 1987).

manipulation and without expectation for participants to attend church services. Instead, the church is to be Christ to participants through these acts of service. These acts of service should not replace the appropriate (traditional) evangelistic activities of the Church of preaching the gospel message but should complement them."[142] This statement makes clear that the ACC are concerned with preserving the integrity of social mission in and of itself and with recognising that evangelistic activities, while being central to the mission of the church, constitute a distinct endeavour.

Regarding public engagement, they see an appropriate place for activism, encouraging ACC members to engage politically over issues that are related to poverty and injustice. "Christians can lobby government to address any injustices within social policy or legislation."[143] This permission is clarified by a further instruction encouraging advocacy for vulnerable people, which is reasonably coherent with their position on refugees, who would be considered destitute. "Christian pastors and leaders are encouraged to engage with disadvantaged groups in their own communities through programs that seek to empower families and individuals."[144] These statements mark a twofold ethical retort from the ACC: firstly, a public policy response; and secondly, an ecclesial one, which is missing from other position statements, particularly those on human life.

The political engagement encouraged in this statement signals that the ACC are willing to broaden the scope of issues dealt with in the public space. As demonstrated in the statement of the early 1990s and 2000s, lobbying against a "moral" issue such as abortion would be seen as standard practice. A statement as clear as this one seems to suggest that the issues in which the ACC are encouraging engagement are diversifying.

2.5.3 Summary of Statements: Social Justice

The addition of these two statements to the ACC's portfolio mark a shift in focus both in terms of the type of issue being addressed and the proposed public and political responses to them. Both papers engage issues of global significance and are less explicit

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[142] Australian Christian Churches, "Poverty," 3.

[143] Ibid.

[144] Ibid.

about the ACC's role in public engagement. Although lobbying is not prohibited, the documents are less concerned about shaping government policy and more concerned about the localised ministry of the church. What is also noteworthy is that, in Australia, throughout the early 2000s and lasting until 2016, asylum seeker and refugee discourse took a premium foothold in the media and became a controversial political issue, driving divisiveness in public conversation. This context could explain why the ACC were reluctant to take a firm moral position supporting a particular policy approach, but also may explain why this issue appears in the ACC ethical corpus in the first place. If this is the case, then it suggests the ACC's propensity to have their moral agenda dictated to, rather than to drive their own moral narrative and priorities supporting the argument that Pentecostal ethics can be reactive rather than proactive. Furthermore, the only consistent thread arising in these two documents that is shared in their broader collection is the reference to the doctrine of the *imago Dei*, though, as in the other documents, it is not explained or defended.

Before summarising the challenges that have emerged in the ACC documentation, one more publication will be reviewed. This final document is similar in approach to the paper on divorce and remarriage: a policy document, published in 2013 for the benefit of ministers in the ACC. In order to attend to as much of their material as possible, its moral content is worth a brief review.

2.6 Ministerial Code of Conduct, 2010

The "Ministerial Code of Conduct" is a document issued by the ACC summarising the moral expectations that are placed on its ministers and representatives. "This code is intended to guide the behaviour of the Ministers in our Movement."[145] Structured into six sections, this document is significant for pentecostal ethics as it prescribes lifestyle guidelines and proscribes certain behaviours for ACC clergy. The following topics are addressed: "Pastoral Example", "Ministry Matters", "Sexual Behaviour", "Financial Matters", "Confidentiality", and "Ministerial Development". Of particular interest are issues of pastoral example, sexual behaviour, and conduct relevant to public engagement.

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[145] Australian Christian Churches, "Ministerial Code of Conduct for Credentialed Ministers," 2010, 1, accessed April 2015, http://www.acc.org.au/. See Appendix M.

Much of the document draws from similar Anglican Church publications and additional supplementary documents dating back to 1988.[146] It is therefore challenging to delineate the material that has originated with the Anglicans and what has been developed by the ACC. Nevertheless, as discussed in chapter 1, this type of adaptation is congruent with pentecostal history and the adoption of theological positions and material from other movements.

In this document, the ACC emphasise personal holiness in their description of conduct befitting a minister; and moral issues pertinent to individual conduct are cited. For example, "A minister must avoid drunkenness, gambling, and abstain from the use of illegal drugs. A minister must not smoke".[147] Ministerial conduct is expected to be consistent with local laws; hence the reference to avoid illegal drugs. But it also goes beyond that by instructing ministers also to avoid practices that are legal, such as smoking. Similarly, some proscriptions like homosexuality are legitimised by particular Scriptures: "Homosexual behaviour is forbidden by Scripture. (Rom 1:24–25)";[148] and some instructions are more generic and pastorally orientated, such as an emphasis on "a healthy lifestyle [including] a balance of service, recreation, and family".[149] Additionally, the code of conduct also gives generic direction to the nature of relationships that ministers are to have with their congregation members, instructing that those interactions are to be "characterized by love, justice, care and compassion".[150]

The ACC provide one exemption where civil law might be broken by a credentialed minister without the revocation of their credentials or more serious disciplinary action. "The only rare exception [to breaking the law] may be when a Christian engages in non-violent civil disobedience as a matter of protest."[151] It is worth noting that there is no elaboration about specific issues that the ACC would expect their ministers to protest, and therefore presumably this discernment is deferred to the conscience of the individuals.

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[146] Ibid., 7.

[147] Ibid., 2.

[148] Ibid., 4.

[149] Ibid., 2.

[150] Ibid., 1.

[151] Ibid.

Following the guidance of the other statements, however, the ACC are unlikely to take issue with a protest against abortion or homosexuality.

There is one additional noteworthy element to the minister's code of conduct that relates to the role of the minister in speaking on behalf of his church or movement on ethical issues. "Care must be exercised when Ministers express a personal opinion on controversial matters. They must distinguish expressing an opinion from speaking on behalf of a local church or the movement."[152] This advice suggests that the ACC adopts overall caution releasing public statements on contentious issues and deliberate carefully on who may speak on their behalf. This hesitancy might be intelligent public relations, but it also opens the movement up to criticism for being silent or ambiguous on issues of public concern. They ask in this regard for ministers to exercise caution in saying anything publicly that could be used against the movement or compromise its credibility and authority.

2.7 Critical Synthesis of ACC Analysis

The examination of the ACC's material reveals some clear challenges and incoherencies within pentecostal ethics. Particularly, there appear to be two distinct avenues of reasoning at work within the statements. While not clearly articulated as methodologies, the rationality and argumentation pivots between appeals to Scripture as decisive and authoritative responses to moral questions, and appeals to conscience and moral discernment as an alternative method of moral reasoning. These two trajectories reflect the sensibilities and influences discussed in chapter 1, the former relating to evangelicalism, and the latter, albeit it to a lesser degree, holiness Christianity. These distinct avenues also represent different vantage points with respect to social engagement. In some instances, the evangelical approach seems to lead to direct political action and lobbying, and the holiness influences can lead to ecclesial separatism. This correlation is not perfect, but the presence of both trends also goes some way to explaining the practical tensions between competing priorities, including strong social engagement, personal morality, and evangelism.

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[152] Ibid., 3.

I now summarise three issues that have emerged in this documentary analysis that demonstrate some difficulties in pentecostal ethics. These include selectivity, the nature of the particular choice of issues; reactivity, the ACC appears reactive (rather than proactive) to issues only as and when they arise; and inconsistency, an adoption of inconsistent (and sometimes confusing) methodology within, and across, the statements.

2.7.1 Selectivity

Of the eleven official documents published by the ACC, many of the topics address issues traditionally defined as those of "personal morality". These include abortion, IVF, sexuality, pornography, gambling, and divorce. Alcohol abuse and illegal drug use are not explored in the positional statements, but are prohibited in the ministerial code of conduct, indicating that they are also important to the ACC.[153] The prohibitions are consistent with the hypotheses described in section 1.2.2 and the historical pattern of pentecostal focus on traditional matters of personal holiness. As Matthias Wenk observes: "The problem of personal sin is far more urgent than is the problem of social redemption".[154] Yee Tham Wan provides a more generous and optimistic interpretation of this situation, arguing that "there is a mystical but real connection between the sanctified life and outward morality".[155] The transformation, central to pentecostal spirituality, is expressed in outward holiness, and exemplified historically, through some of the moral codes described in chapter 1. In the ACC's context, matters of public concern (often described as social ethics) have been eclipsed by the focus on issues of personal morality. Until 2015, no documents were published on social issues such as local poverty and income inequality, asylum seekers and refugees, unemployment and housing affordability, global poverty, climate change and environmental issues, war, and militarism. In 2015 the ACC released their first papers on broader social justice issues, including poverty and refugees. The recent shift in focus, indicated by the introduction of the consideration of new issues, requires a more robust explanation.

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[153] Ibid.

[154] Wenk, "Holy Spirit," 140.

[155] Yee Tham Wan, "Bridging the Gap between Pentecostal Holiness and Morality," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 4, no. 2 (2001): 175.

A critical approach would argue that pentecostalism's criteria for what constitutes an ethical issue was grafted in from the evangelical interface described in chapter 1, setting much of the moral agenda. This agenda may also have been strengthened given the commonality between evangelical prohibitions and holiness priorities despite the divergent methodological foundations. While the uncompromising and absolutist tone may be described as possessing a "fundamentalist flavour", as described in the historiography, it is probably an unfair use of the term, from both the pentecostal and fundamentalist vantage point. The pentecostal estrangement from fundamentalism is described by Vinson Synan as an opportunity that "[free]d the rising Pentecostals from the dead cultural and theological baggage of a discredited movement and opened up the way for unparalleled influence and growth in the last half of the twentieth century".[156] Pentecostals' new alliance with the evangelicals may have adopted some "fundamentalist-sounding" morality, but pentecostals were also able to recalibrate their emphasis on more distinctly pentecostal priorities. This manifested as "Pentecostals present[ing] themselves as a kind of 'Evangelicals plus' that is, Evangelicals plus fire, dedication, missionary success, speaking in tongues, and gifts of healing".[157] This manifestation, in a sense, explains the similarities with the evangelical moral priorities without having to excuse them. The question that needs answering in this regard is whether the ACC's shift in focus is conscious or not, and, if the former is the case, the rationale behind the shift warrants an explanation.

2.7.2 Reactivity

A possible explanation for the shift in focus could be that the moral agenda for the ACC is reacting to forces external to the movement. If this is the case, an ethical position is

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[156] Vinson Synan, "Fundamentalism," in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess, Gary B. McGee, and Patrick H. Alexander (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 327. Cited by Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 192.

[157] Synan, "Fundamentalism," 327. See also Dempster, who explains that in establishing their independence from the "Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy, Pentecostals conceived of their identity as 'Fundamentalists plus.' The 'plus', however, was the experience of Holy Spirit baptism, belief in present-tense miracles and the practice of walking with the living God." Dempster, "Search for Pentecostal Identity," 2.

developed only when a response is demanded, or an issue can no longer be ignored. An example, in reverse, is the ACC's conspicuous silence on euthanasia and assisted suicide, a controversial ethical issue addressed by both the Pentecostal Church in Canada (2001) and the AG in (2002). Both Pentecostal movements oppose these practices, but, as Warrington describes, "room is provided that enables people to decide whether the quality of life experienced by an individual is enhanced by the medical treatment offered".[158] Even these simplistic responses are nuanced enough to recognise that the issue itself has complexities difficult to address in the confines of a positional statement.[159] Where euthanasia has been on the public and political agenda in places such as Canada and the United States for many years, in Australia this issue has gathered political momentum only in the last few years.

An alternative explanation, possibly driven by the desire to "stay out of controversial matters", is that nondisclosure encapsulates a good PR strategy. The nondisclosure of the ACC's documents to the public also indicates that they desire to remain out of the broader public discourse. Either way, given the possible sensitivity toward public perception mentioned above, it is unlikely that the ACC would volunteer a position on an ethical issue unless their silence attracted more attention than a clearly articulated position. The hypothesis that pentecostals, at least the ACC, react to the ethical issues of the day proves, more likely than not, to be true.

2.7.3 Inconsistency

While it may come as no surprise that the ACC's methodology places a premium on deontological approaches to ethics, to suggest that it is exclusively so is disingenuous. They appear to take a much more heterogeneous approach across their positional papers, where much of their moral content is congruent with common sense and wisdom, which, while it may be biblical, is not only biblical. The inclusion of extrabiblical material in their

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[158] Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 233.

[159] Where some of the positions described by the Canadian and American Pentecostals are similar in character and content to those of the ACC, there has been one formal discussion paper provided by the AG with a "cautious presentation of guidelines that include the acknowledgement that the Bible offers little help in these debates", including that about euthanasia. Ibid.

arguments may also seem surprising, but given pentecostalism is also Protestant, this is theoretically consistent with is deeper roots in Protestantism. More generically, the inclusion of additional sources has continuity with broader church historical tradition, that although Scripture might be "prima" for theology it is rarely, if ever, "sola".[160] As Don Thorsen, who has written on the theological dynamics of Protestant theology and Wesleyan Christianity describes, "prima [not sola] makes more sense in describing the complex understanding of Protestant Reformers and […] the diversity of beliefs, values, and practices in the subsequent development of Protestant Christianity".[161]

Allan Anderson provides further context on the relationship between pentecostals and their use of Scripture and supports the complexity noted in the historiography—pentecostal hermeneutics is more complex than "slavish" biblical literalism.[162] Robeck notes that pentecostals are aware of diverse interpretations of Scriptures and are not reliant on literal interpretations. Furthermore, their hermeneutics are not so myopic that additional sources of authority are excluded. These can include "reason, experience, conscience, science, [and] culture".[163] While the ACC appeal to rules and principles, mainly from the biblical text—described by Scott Rae and others as a "divine command" approach[164]—there are references to authorities outside of the Scriptures, including the use of reason, or simple assertions of morality with no scriptural substantiation, such as ministerial prohibitions against smoking. Therefore Warrington's contention that "Pentecostals affirm that the Bible is authoritative with regard to issues concerning salvation and faith, conveying propositional truth and guidance for life"[165] in

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[160] Evangelical (with Pentecostal sympathies) Clark Pinnock argues that "for all our talk about 'sola scriptura', the bible is seldom left 'alone.'" Clark H. Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle* (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 2000), 80. He also notes that "Scripture may be *prima* for theology but it is not *sola* because tradition plays a role in interpretation." Clark H. Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God's Openness* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2019), 30.

[161] Don Thorsen, "*Prima Gratia, Prima Fide*, and *Prima Scriptura*: Reforming Protestant Principles," in *The Continuing Relevance of Wesleyan Theology: Essays in Honor of Laurence W. Wood*, ed. Nathan Crawford (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 201.

[162] Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 223–24.

[163] Robeck Jr., "Word, Spirit, and Discernment," 139.

[164] Rae, *Moral Choices*, 47.

[165] Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 182.

practice seems to be only half the story. The other side of the story includes an awareness of virtue and holiness, for pentecostals are also dependent on additional sources to substantiate, arbitrate, and/or interpret the biblical material, and to supply moral guidance in instances of scriptural silence. The recognition of additional sources by the ACC indicates that they have at worst, a chaotic approach, but at best, a more complex approach transcending simplistic absolutism.[166]

Instances of this complexity are demonstrated in their reference to conscience, with regard to IVF, remarriage, and civil disobedience; to virtue, with regard to poverty and asylum seekers; to church tradition, with regard to abortion and the ministerial code of conduct; to elements of systematic theology in their referral to the *imago Dei*; to reason, with regard to abortion and sexuality; and to secular authorities, such as the law of the land, the Australian Medical Association, and the UN Declaration of Human Rights. While referring to some ideas generated from systematic theology, the ACC approach overall is not "systematic" in the orderly sense, demonstrated by the lack of consistency in their approaches to similar issues, such as abortion and IVF. To identify coherent threads throughout their arguments has been challenging, making the ACC's methodology difficult to pin down.

2.8 Conclusion: Hybrid Methodologies Are Accepted and Sustained

The analysis in this chapter has established some clear challenges with pentecostal ethics, particularly regarding its consistency and coherency. Using the methodological approach outlined in the introduction, a hermeneutic of suspicion was applied to the ecclesial literature with particular attention to the inherent weaknesses, challenges, and inconsistencies. This analysis was encompassed in a case study of the ACC ethics documentation. Each published position paper was examined, followed by a summary of the challenges that emerged in each cluster of papers. This chapter concluded with a summary of the most significant problems that substantiate the claim that pentecostal ethics has some inherent challenges that require attention. These included selective

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[166] Furthermore, Alexander notes that Pentecostals only appeared to be biblical literalists and "their hermeneutic was actually more Christ- and Spirit-centered", the book of Acts being the hermeneutical key. P. Alexander, *Peace to War*, 90.

attention to ethical issues, apparent reactivity, and inconsistent approach to methodology.

The observations in chapter 1 regarding pentecostalism's moral historiography also became apparent, and a correlation between the Methodist and holiness heritage and the appeal to virtue, conscience, and sensitivity to social impacts emerged in the documents. Simultaneously, a correlation arose between the influences of evangelicalism and scriptural literalism discussed in chapter 1, and the ACC's absolutist approach to Scripture. This is not to conclude that the ACC employed an established methodology that mediated their application of these approaches, but only to observe that both approaches retained validity and relevance in the mind of the pentecostals responsible for composing these documents. A reconciliation of these approaches and the challenges mentioned above are issues that would need to be considered in explaining or articulating a possible systematic approach to pentecostal ethics.

While this chapter has identified some clear problems, chapter 3 will assume a different vantage point—a hermeneutic of generosity, with a view to establishing what is "right" with pentecostal ethics, or at the very least, to seek a more positive explanation. Furthermore chapter 3 will be cognisant of any "pentecostal philosophy" or self-understanding that could give rise to an internal coherency or rationality that may resolve the disparities observed in the ACC's literature and the eclectic moral history of pentecostalism. An adequate account would include the role of personal holiness, particularly conscience and virtue, and the range of ways in which the Bible may or may not be legitimately used. Additionally, it would include how holiness and Scripture relate to the inclusion of complementary and additional approaches to moral reasoning, and illuminate the range of interactions with public morality and civil law. Lastly, a comprehensive account would explain the ecclesiological dynamics—both separatist and activist.

Given this goal, a survey of scholarship that addresses pentecostal ethics will be conducted to establish whether the academic literature can constructively explain or illuminate the state of pentecostal ethics. The academic scholarship will be evaluated, with a view to consider its strengths and patterns, and with a sensitivity to pentecostalism's internal intelligibility. In other words, the scholarly contributions to

pentecostal ethics will be analysed on their own merit, without respect to external criteria superimposed to cast methodological judgements—a hermeneutic of generosity.

PART II: A HEREMENEUTIC OF GENEROSITY

Part II of this thesis complements the hermeneutic of suspicion by adopting a generous approach—evaluating pentecostal ethics on its own terms. A selection of scholarly contributions pertaining to ethics is chosen to elaborate current thinking and dialogue in the pentecostal academy. These contributions, when considered in light of the Australian Christian Churches (ACC) papers, reveal at least five characteristics that are reflective of pentecostal approaches to ethics.

CHAPTER 3

AN ILLUMINATION OF PENTECOSTAL ETHICS

3.1 Introduction: Moral Reflection in the Pentecostal Academy

Chapter 1 explored some key historical patterns and challenges characteristic of pentecostal ethics and chapter 2 examined the ecclesial documents of the Australian Christian Churches (ACC) as a specific case study in pentecostal ethics. This documentary analysis revealed some clear challenges, which included an apparent selective and reactive approach to ethical issues as well as an inconsistent methodology. Some of the inconsistencies are likely influenced by the distinct approaches outlined in chapter 1's pentecostal moral historiography. While the moral historiography might account for the inconsistency, it does not explain on what issues and in what instances these methods might be applied. Consequently, not only does pentecostal ethics seem inconsistent but it is also confusing for anyone seeking to understand its characteristics. Both chapters 1 and 2 employed a hermeneutic of suspicion intentionally to shed light on these challenges.

Chapter 3 takes a different approach to the pentecostal literature by implementing a hermeneutic of generosity to evaluate pentecostal ethics on its own terms. This method will be applied to the academic literature from the pentecostal tradition and to insightful contributions from scholars who engage the pentecostal academy. Consequently, the following scholars include those who, as per the nomenclature in chapter 1, are "Pentecostal" and "pentecostal": the former, those who are formally part of a Pentecostal denomination or organisation, and the latter, those who

might be charismatic, or can at least relate to and constructively dialogue with the broader pentecostal style of church and ministry. James K. A. Smith's and Nimi Wariboko's contributions to philosophy and methodology are considered, as well as Murray Dempster's and Paul Alexander's work on social ethics, Daniela Augustine's work on economic and theological ethics, and the work of Daniel Castelo, a Methodist scholar who proposes a dialogue between pentecostal spirituality and virtue ethics. Although these ethicists and theologians will be the focus of this chapter due to their significant contributions to ethics specifically, it does not preclude the inclusion of other pentecostal scholars, many of whom have already been integrated into the historiography in chapter 1 and who will appear throughout the rest of this thesis.

3.2 Scholarly Contributions to Pentecostal Ethics

Regarding James Smith, who has pioneered work on pentecostal philosophy and worldview, his writing articulates a helpful pentecostal self-understanding that is necessary for a hermeneutic of generosity. He identifies as a charismatic who is part of the "Reformed intellectual tradition" which locates him within the "small p" pentecostal community defined in chapter 1. Despite this, he maintains strong connections with established Pentecostal organisations such as the Society for Pentecostal Studies (SPS) and the Assemblies of God (AG) in the United States.[1] Similarly, Nimi Wariboko is a key pentecostal scholar for this thesis. An ethicist and philosopher with strong ties to the American Pentecostal establishment, Wariboko is the current editor of *Pneuma*, the official Journal of SPS. Murray Dempster is the Professor of Social Ethics at Southeastern University in Florida. As well as publishing in the field of social ethics, he has served as president of SPS in 1991 and the co-director of the Centre of Global Pentecostalism. His longevity in the pentecostal academy, particularly in the field of social ethics, establishes his work as crucial for any constructive discussions of pentecostal ethics.

Paul Alexander is also a past president of SPS and has extensively published on matters of pentecostal social ethics. His work on pacifism in American pentecostalism

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[1] James K. A. Smith, "Q&A with Jamie Smith on Pentecostalism," interview by Myrna Anderson, Calvin University MI, September 17, 2010, https://calvin.edu/news/archive/q-a-with-jamie-smith-on-pentecostalism.

brings significant insight to the history and evolution of pentecostal ethics and therefore exemplifies the way in which a social-ethical issue might be tackled. Since his presidential address to SPS in 2013, his relationship with the AG has unfortunately deteriorated. His credentials have been revoked and recently he has pursued what would appear to be a gender transition.[2] Nevertheless, his work is representative of the kind of scholarship that is pushing the boundaries of what has been considered establishment and mainstream in pentecostalism and therefore supplies a unique dimension to current ethics dialogue.

Daniela Augustine, also a member of SPS where she served as the chair of Christian Ethics for nine years, giving her firsthand exposure to the emerging ethics scholarship of the pentecostal tradition. Her own publications focus on theological and economic ethics, which are enhanced by her qualifications in both economics and theology as well as her upbringing in eastern Europe and her exposure to its cultural, political, and religious dynamics. Finally, Daniel Castelo's work on pentecostal spirituality and ethics will be considered. As a Methodist and pentecostal theologian, Castelo brings the Methodist vantage point to his work, a dimension critical to understanding the moral dynamics of pentecostalism demonstrated in chapter 1's pentecostal historiography.

Including these scholars' contributions will serve this thesis in two ways. Firstly, their writing indicates the approaches, assumptions, and issues deliberated on in the pentecostal academy. Secondly, their work illuminates (or challenges) the ecclesial engagement reviewed in chapter 2 by attesting to the extent of unity (or distinction) between academic perspectives and ministerial practices. Further, pentecostalism's "in-house" intelligibility will be developed based on the common characteristics and trends that have emerged thus far and that will continue to emerge in this chapter. As Daniel Castelo argues: "Once Pentecostal approaches to the wider world are considered on their own terms (that is theologically), one can come to recognize the existence of something that could be termed Pentecostalism's 'critical tradition.'"[3] This "critical tradition" necessarily illuminates pentecostal approaches to ethics, even if the illumination is not

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[2] As noted earlier, online sources indicate that Alexander is going by the first name "April", but given the material included in this thesis was published under his former name, "Paul Nathan Alexander" will be maintained in the bibliographical information. https://bham.academia.edu/PAlexander/CurriculumVitae.

[3] Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics*, 13.

explicit, and it could constitute an evaluation of pentecostal ethics playing by its "in-house" rules of engagement. This is the purpose of the hermeneutic of generosity: exploring pentecostal ethics on its own terms, rather than on the terms of an alternate or adversarial tradition.

3.2.1 James K. A. Smith: Five Philosophical Pillars of Pentecostalism

Philosopher James Smith proposes a distinct pentecostal "worldview",[4] the elements of which may provide some intelligibility to pentecostal ethics.[5] I have already employed Smith to provide a working definition of "pentecostal" for the purpose of this project. It should be noted, therefore, that his arguments can be applied to the "broad church" of Pentecostalism, defined in chapter 1. Amongst Smith's contributions is his philosophical overview of pentecostalism, *Thinking in Tongues*, that argues for a pentecostal "place at the scholarly table".[6] He identifies the five elements of a pentecostal worldview as follows: "(1) a radical openness to God; (2) an 'enchanted' theology of creation and culture; (3) a nondualistic affirmation of embodiment and materiality; (4) an affective narrative epistemology; and (5) an eschatological orientation to mission and justice".[7] Essentially his argument highlights the commonality between the various pentecostalisms across the globe—that while they might vary in their practical expressions to a greater or lesser degree, what unites them is a fivefold philosophy (or worldview) that informs their spirituality.[8]

Regarding the specifics of his argument, "a radical openness to God" is grounded in the "deep sense of expectation and an openness to surprise".[9] This disposition

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[4] Or, borrowing Charles Taylor's term, a distinct pentecostal "social imaginary". See Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 23–25. Taylor does not specifically discuss Pentecostalism but makes references to Christianity in general. Smith also finds resonance with Amos Yong's account of the "pneumatological imagination". See Amos Yong, *Spirit, Word, Community: Theological Hermeneutics in Trinitarian Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2006), 119–49.

[5] This is most clearly outlined in Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, xviii.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., 32–33.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid., 33.

encompasses practices that make tangible the sense of spontaneity and creativity, such as the openness of pentecostal worship to ecstatic experiences and unscripted moments. This openness is typical of pentecostal spirituality, supported by beliefs that God is going to manifest in different and new ways. The Acts 2 story, where the followers of Jesus received the "baptism of the spirit" and subsequently spoke in tongues, marked the moment where the work of God took on an entirely new theological tone. The disciples were instructed to wait for this gift, and upon receiving the gift, what occurred was unplanned and unstructured. This story became the archetype that grounds pentecostal "expectancy" and "spontaneity"—or radical openness.[10] While this disposition may vindicate the diverse approaches to spirituality within the movement, it actively resists a strict ordering to its practice. If this philosophical underpinning is as central to pentecostalism as Smith claims it to be, what might appear to be a strength of the movement—its "creativity and spontaneity"— could very well be a vice to anyone trying to comprehend its approach to ethics, given the confusion that could arise from multifarious approaches on the one hand, and a desire to systematise them on the other.

The second element of a pentecostal worldview, an "'enchanted' theology of creation and culture", recognises the continual cosmic work of the Holy Spirit in both natural and human creations, and a consciousness of the innate spiritual dimension to the world in which we live. From an outsider's perspective, the lived reality of this vantage point can come across as a simplistic, pre-modern, hyper-spirituality; however, Smith explains it as "a deep sense of the Spirit's immanence […] that affirms the Spirit's continued presence and activity".[11] Where this "immanence" becomes highly relevant, with regard to pentecostal ethics, is that the "enchantment" of the world not only manifests in supernatural deliverance and liberation but demonic bondage and oppression. Spirituality, therefore, including prayer and worship, is "a mode of struggle"[12] against evil that works in conjunction with and sometimes transcends human activity. Given the intensely practical dimension of ethics, and indeed its practical orientation— "what should we do if …"—an orientation toward "otherworldly" activity can foster an

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[10] Ibid., 33–35.

[11] Ibid., 40.

[12] Ibid., 41.

impression that pentecostal morality is tied up in the supernatural to the detriment of what might be possible on an earthly level. Furthermore, this sensitivity to the supernatural can seem to an outsider dissonant with Smith's third proposal, which seeks to integrate the material and spiritual, and which therefore would seem to place value on human activity in combating evil.

This third element, "a non-dualistic affirmation of embodiment and materiality", undergirds a subtle rejection of a Platonic approach "to the world that sees material reality—both bodies and material elements associated with bodies (sexuality, the arts)—as fundamentally bad or evil".[13] The expression of embodiment is most clearly seen in the pentecostal affirmation and desire for earthly bodily healing, and material prosperity, not simply at the margins but at a fundamental level, such as opposition to poverty.[14] As noted above, this acceptance of the materiality of the world may seem dissonant with the priority of "enchantment" but this priority is not a rejection of the spiritual; it is simply a recognition of its embodiment.

Fourthly, "an affective narrative epistemology" suggests that "knowledge is rooted in the heart and traffics in the stuff of story [, and] imagination precedes intellection".[15] Smith explores in further detail this element's affective power in a later chapter on epistemology, but he alludes to its potential to synergise with postmodern sensibilities.[16] This proposal might explain the apparent inherent resistance within pentecostalism toward systematic ethics. Given that Smith highlights the role narrative epistemology plays in pentecostalism, it may clash with any contemporary or historical ethical traditions that reject the epistemological value of narrative (including storytelling and life experience). These clashes could include, for example, ethical systems that prioritise ethical absolutes such as deontology or systems such as utilitarianism that have a purist approach to outcomes.

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[13] Ibid., 42.

[14] Smith recognises that this element of worldview could find resonance with Catholic social teaching, or even liberation theology, notwithstanding that the philosophical underpinnings might be quite divergent. Ibid., 43.

[15] Ibid., 43–44.

[16] Ibid., 44.

Finally, in casting the outpouring of the Spirit in Acts 2 as a sign of "the last days", Smith generates an argument that suggests pentecostal eschatology is a critical element of the pentecostal worldview[17]—specifically an eschatological orientation toward "a commitment both to mission and to ministries of empowerment and social justice"[18] that challenges and overturns instantiated power relationships all the way from the fishermen at Pentecost to the racial reconciliation at Azusa Street.[19] Here Smith has presented a theological rationale for social justice that is commensurate with both the pentecostal lived experience historically and contemporary critiques that suggest pentecostal ethics necessarily includes an eschatology of transformation in the present. This argument may sound admirable but fails to offer anything practical or concrete that can further the pentecostal ethics dialogue to a level of ordered articulation.

Speaking further into the efficacy of Smith's work, Peter Versteeg suggests it exists on the fringe in relation to the pentecostal mainstream, and speaks only to the marginal, yet emerging and important, "Global Pentecostal/charismatic intellectual avant-garde".[20] The location of Smith's work may also explain, as William Abraham describes, the lack of

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[17] Dempster refers to this as "An eschatological intensity and an existential identification with 'the full gospel' of New Testament Apostolic Christianity". Dempster, "Search for Pentecostal Identity," 1.

[18] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 45. This is not to ignore the challenges that Pentecostal eschatology has produced in articulating an approach to social justice, specifically eschatological continuity versus eschatological annihilation. Dempster, "Christian Social Concern," 62. Smith clearly assumes the former, as would other Pentecostal theologians such as Volf. See Miroslav Volf, "On Loving with Hope: Eschatology and Social Responsibility," *Transformation* 7, no. 3 (1990): 31.

[19] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 44–46. The Pentecost event is also recognised by Shuman and others as ethically significant, particularly for an ethic of nonviolence, given that a new people is created in the outpouring of the Spirit who are called to live out the Christian story consistent with the "history of Israel" and "life of Jesus", and concurrently, the curse of Babel, which represents division and conflict, was reversed, and the scattering and hostility created by the curse are transformed by the gathering under Pentecost. Joel Shuman, "Pentecost and the End of Patriotism: A Call for the Restoration of Pacifism among Pentecostal Christians," in P. Alexander, *Pentecostals and Nonviolence*, 166–70. See also Hauerwas's take on this in Stanley Hauerwas, "Abortion, Theologically Understood (1991)," in *The Hauerwas Reader*, ed. John Berkman and Michael Cartwright (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 603–22.

[20] Peter Versteeg, review of *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*, by James K. A. Smith, *Ars Disputandi* 12, no. 1 (2012): 3.

practical exemplars and additionally locates the majority of his arguments in the theoretical frame.[21] His work need not be rejected on this basis, however, as it holds within itself the capacity to "debate with different academic conversation partners",[22] particularly those interested in philosophy.

Although Smith's work is not primarily a work of ethics, nor does it encapsulate popular pentecostal thought, it is nevertheless a valuable exploration and scholarly reflection of what ought to "make pentecostals tick" theologically, and how they ought to see the world, which by implication includes its ethical and moral dimensions. Smith's theological epistemology exemplifies a framework that can account for apparent inconsistencies or lack of systematisation in their practices by establishing a broader philosophical structure through which the pentecostal worldview can be understood. As Castelo notes in his reflections on pentecostal ethics, one's vision of the world and one's actions in the world are intimately connected. The latter are shaped by the former.[23] In summary, one might have to dig deeper into the interior worldview to illuminate the intelligibility within pentecostalism's exterior practices.

3.2.2 Nimi Wariboko: The Guiding Principle of Pentecostal Ethics

The work of another pentecostal theologian, ethicist and philosopher, Nimi Wariboko, is valuable, given his book, *The Pentecostal Principle*, is "about methodology rather than a traditional subject of social ethics".[24] While Wariboko writes across a broad range of disciplines, including economic ethics and African cultural studies, *The Pentecostal Principle* sustains a methodological approach by avoiding particular issues of social ethics and focuses on concepts and abstractions unique to pentecostal philosophy. Wariboko

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[21] William J. Abraham, review of *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*, by James K. A. Smith, *Faith and Philosophy* 29, no. 2 (2012): 249.

[22] Versteeg, review of *Thinking in Tongues*, 3.

[23] "Given the Pentecostal ethos, I believe that such a task has to be framed within the integrationist conventions and sensibilities that the field of moral theology displays, for moral theology audaciously suggest that the way one goes about living in the world (moral) is unquestionably and determinatively shaped by one's vision and participation in God. (theology)" Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics*, 6.

[24] Wariboko, *Pentecostal Principle*, 18.

maintains that "Pentecostalism is something new",[25] but not so new that it is unintelligible. Pentecostalism's historical antecedents provide some context that help us to understand its Protestant backdrop. The suggestion cited earlier, that pentecostals can comfortably "self-describe" as "evangelicals plus", resonates more generally with Wariboko's assertion that pentecostalism, "while it is also Protestant, it is not merely Protestant".[26]

Like Smith, Wariboko takes on the challenge of articulating what could be considered a "pentecostal ethical worldview". Wariboko's goal is to initiate new theological and social conversations in the pentecostal movement and to see the movement influence beyond itself in socially and ethically significant ways.[27] More particularly, he proposes a conceptual idea that has the capacity to reframe the ethical conversation within a new paradigm of thinking: "the pentecostal principle". This paradigm is defined in contrast to what he describes as the protestant principle: "a symbol of protest, an outside force or energy reacting against the particular that raises itself to universal status and finality of form".[28] "The pentecostal principle", however, reimagines the protestant principle as "the spirit of creativity, the creative transforming energy that operates within the structures and throughout the processes of creation […] the power of emergent creativity that disrupts social existence, generates infinite restlessness, and issues in novelty".[29] Later he further describes "the pentecostal principle" as an innate attraction to the good—"the restless search and realization of new forms and unions of form and meaning".[30]

Wariboko establishes his vantage point from the outset by proposing "the

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[25] Ibid., 17.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Yet Andrew Youd admits that the Pentecostal church is "struggling to keep up with, let alone influence" the public conversation. Andrew Youd, review of *The Pentecostal Principle*, by Nimi Wariboko, *Australian Pentecostal Studies*, no. 14 (2012): 121–24. He is not using the term "Pentecostal" in its classical understanding. He is using James Smith's definition: "An understanding of Christian faith that is radically open to the continued operations of the Spirit". Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, xvii.

[28] Wariboko, *Pentecostal Principle*, 44.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid., 45.

pentecostal principle" as a working response to pluralistic social and ethical contexts. Positively, his work is helpful in explaining the existence of plurality, though not necessarily resolving it.[31] Thus his model provides both a methodology to approach the pluralistic situation, and a worldview which accounts for it. The potentiality that is tied up in "the pentecostal principle" is described as follows: "The wind that blows anywhere it wishes cannot be confined and thus it analogically points to abundance of alternatives and possibilities".[32] "The pentecostal principle" necessarily accounts for, at least in Wariboko's mind, the possibility that pentecostal ethical approaches, dispositions, and outcomes can vary considerably, while having in common the pentecostal "spirit".

Smith argues for a pentecostal worldview that demands a "radical openness to divine surprises".[33] Wariboko explores one such "divine surprise": glossolalia, or speaking in tongues. Given the almost universal recognition that tongues is "the pentecostal distinctive", his identification of glossolalia as a symbol of "the pentecostal principle" is appropriate and does not place him outside of the pentecostal mainstream.[34] Tongues, he claims, is an example of the synthesis of divine "breath" and spoken "word"—"the quintessential example of creativity".[35] He argues that the pentecostal experience of tongues is both an opening of conversation and the decentralisation of traditional methods and practices. Specifically, he proposes that "glossolalia on the Day of Pentecost arguably points to information dispersal: that is, the development, distribution, and decentralization of information as the key to human creativity and productivity in the age of the Spirit".[36] Wariboko further describes the outpouring of the Spirit in the book of Acts

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[31] Andrew Youd describes this as "the cacophony of voices that dominates the public conversation". Youd, review of *The Pentecostal Principle*, 121.

[32] Wariboko, *Pentecostal Principle*, 44.

[33] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 34.

[34] For an example of the use of "pentecostal distinctive", see Frank D. Macchia, "The Kingdom and the Power: Spirit Baptism in Pentecostal and Ecumenical Perspective," in *The Work of the Spirit: Pneumatology and Pentecostalism*, ed. Michael Welker (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2006), 109–12.

[35] Wariboko, *Pentecostal Principle*, 28.

[36] Ibid., 29.

as the "moment when human creativity was linked to divine creativity".[37] The Spirit's outpouring is both the symbol of, and the energy to actualise, "the pentecostal principle".

Wariboko does not claim that "the pentecostal principle" answers the world's moral dilemmas, but nevertheless it presents new ways of framing ethical and social questions. Furthermore, its synthesis with emergence—"unended action or process" as "pure means"[38]—a priori challenges the legitimacy of foreign "systems", including secular and religious rationalities, seeking to superimpose themselves on pentecostalism.[39] Furthermore, his particular conception of emergence, which "creates space for something to happen, without predetermining what that will be",[40] is derived from emergentist philosophy, which "calls forth a world that is open to novelty, uncertainty, disruption, and chance more than ever before".[41] Emergence not only resists forms of determinative ethics but demands openness to new and creative approaches.

From a social justice perspective, Wariboko views the "Pentecostal principle [as] always at work resisting obstacles to human flourishing, and is committed to creating, broadening and deepening new possibilities of life".[42] He envisions a pentecostal community always "on edge" and "ready to respond" to life's complexities, inferring that structured or traditional approaches might be insufficient, or lack the agility, to resolve the challenges that may present themselves. In this regard he proposes ethics in line with "the pentecostal principle": "an ethics where central focus is not on code; rather its accent is placed on the processes of actualization of potentialities".[43]

Like Smith, however, because Wariboko's writing is primarily philosophical and theoretical, it becomes very difficult to "pin down" any practical or orderly account of what a pentecostal ethic might look like. He is not oblivious to the reality that he may well be developing a vision rather than accounting for the past or present context. Nevertheless, even pentecostal scholars struggle to identify a clear definition of

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[37] Ibid., 45.

[38] Ibid., 72.

[39] Ibid., 83–90.

[40] Ibid., 72.

[41] Ibid., 77.

[42] Ibid., 41.

[43] Ibid., 70.

Wariboko's "pentecostal principle"[44] and Christopher Stephenson suggests that "some might ask what exactly is peculiarly Pentecostal about a principle characterized by new possibilities",[45] and that the correlation is limited and could equally be adopted by postmodern or process philosophy. Wariboko maintains that pentecostal ethics "is the critical and systematic reflection and interpretive exploration of the future, progress and problems and concerns deriving from the history, lived antecedents, and concrete actuality of the Pentecostal spirit".[46] In this regard his work is focused around what pentecostal ethics "could be" rather than "what is" and scholars such as Vondey note that Wariboko's elaborate descriptions, such as "pentecostalism as play", lack definitive examples of the practices necessary that give rise to this "state of being".[47]

The eschatological elements of a pentecostal worldview are expanded by Wariboko in a complementary work, *The Charismatic City*. He proposes that the best ideas, innovations, and answers are yet to be discovered. This futurism is the eschatological element of the charismatic city: "It is eschatological to the extent that the full realization of the Charismatic City remains distant in time, or rather at the edges".[48] As a precursor to an exploration of pentecostal eschatology as it pertains to justice and morality, he develops the concept of the "charismatic city", not as a geographical or cultural location but as the transient "center of gravity" where the local and global interact in the form of "networks, new beginnings, new thinking, new energies, and renewed religious intensity".[49]

Synthesising this proposition with the previous arguments, "the charismatic city" seems to be a conceptual microcosm where the emergent creativity of "the pentecostal

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[44] Allan H. Anderson, review of *The Pentecostal Principle: Ethical Methodology in New Spirit*, by Nimi Wariboko, *Studies in World Christianity* 19, no. 1 (2013): 118.

[45] Christopher A. Stephenson, review of *The Pentecostal Principle: Ethical Methodology in New Spirit*, by Nimi Wariboko, *PentecoStudies: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Research on the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* 14, no. 1 (2015): 141.

[46] Wariboko, *Pentecostal Principle*, 160.

[47] Wolfgang Vondey, "Religion as Play: Pentecostalism as a Theological Type," *Religions* 9, no. 80 (2018): 4.

[48] Nimi Wariboko, *The Charismatic City and the Public Resurgence of Religion: A Pentecostal Social Ethics of Cosmopolitan Urban Life* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 165.

[49] Ibid., xvi.

principle" is most fully realised. This synthesis is explored further in Harvey Cox's publication, *The Secular City*,[50] in which he recognises that "New religious mutations are springing up, some of which creatively combine dimensions of the religious and secular".[51] Cox identifies pentecostalism as one such movement, "expanding in part because it offers people a way of being both 'modern' and intensely religious at the same time".[52] Wariboko contends that the "emerging urban, cosmopolitan civilization, shot through with transnational spiritual energies" is the conduit by which human potentials can be actualised.[53] With regard to ethics, the collision of the contemporary and the religious, *The Charismatic City* provides both healing for those who are victims of human suffering, and hope for a better future.

Where *The Pentecostal Principle* speaks to the emergence and creativity inherent within pentecostalism, *The Charismatic City* essentially contends with the magnification of these dynamics in the context of secularisation and cosmopolitanism. Although these two vantage points assist in illuminating pentecostalism as a philosophy, they are limited in aiding understanding of pentecostal ethics. From a systematic perspective, Wariboko sees pentecostalism as providing a positive and constructive approach to moral discourse that avoids the "ethics of negation" and absolutist motifs proposed by some evangelical approaches, such as those of Norman Geisler, Wayne Grudem, and John Jefferson Davis. Indeed, Wariboko indicates that part of what defines pentecostalism is that it is not fundamentalism.[54] Given his philosophical focus, he does not engage with systematic conversations pertaining to doctrines of the Bible, and it would be unreasonable to expect him to do so. However, he does note that pentecostal ethics "regarded with envy the biblical, fundamentalist ethics and borrowed or had recourse to the method of general

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[50] Harvey Cox, *The Secular City: Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013).

[51] Ibid., xxviii.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Wariboko, *Charismatic City*, xv. For a Pentecostal missiological approach to urban engagement see Augustus Cerillo Jr., "Pentecostals and the City," in Dempster, Klaus, and Petersen, *Called and Empowered*, 98–119.

[54] Wariboko, *Pentecostal Principle*, 7.

social ethics",[55] which could be his way of explaining any superimposition of ethics models onto pentecostalism, including the biblically orientated holiness and evangelical flavours. Vondey's description of "pentecostal play" in light of doctrine is helpful here: "[p]entecostal theology does not want to be understood; it wants to be practiced and lived. Pentecostalism exists more in the realm of possibilities and wonder than in the realm of already actualized and objectified projections of reality".[56] In this regard, Wariboko's critique is resonant with those mainstream ethicists who reject deontological approaches for being too rigid, but simultaneously he refuses to set up camp in an alternative methodology, instead opting for an open and creative approach to pentecostal ethics begging the question as to whether dogmatic resolution is either possible or desirable. Indeed Vondey notes of "play" that it "collapses when this tension is resolved prematurely, either by over realized confidence in doctrine or an escapist appeal to a pure experience of God".[57] Though neither are considered ultimate ends in pentecostalism, Wariboko's "play" requires the existence of extremes "in order to remain in the realm of possibilities".[58] Further to his elucidation on ecstatic speech as pure means, he avoids evaluating tongues in light of a specific purpose or outcome. An expectation that a pentecostal theology is an end in and of itself would resolve the play, and the "pure means" by which it was created would be invalidated.[59]

Clearly, and frustratingly for some, Wariboko's goal is not to align pentecostal approaches to justice, morality and ethics into a single voice marked by uniformity. Similarly, Daniela Augustine, whose work will be explored later in this chapter, proposes that the "kenosis of the Spirit" at Pentecost works against social fragmentation rather than reinforces it, by equalising the plurality as opposed to abolishing it.[60] Wariboko's work therefore, dignifies an eclectic approach to ethics appropriate for pentecostals, not by endorsing a plethora of established philosophies but by proposing a distinct vantage

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[55] Ibid., 160.

[56] Vondey, "Religion as Play," 10.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Wariboko, *Pentecostal Principle*, 63–64.

[60] Daniela C. Augustine, *Pentecost, Hospitality, and Transfiguration: Toward a Spirit-Inspired Vision of Social Transformation* (Cleveland, TN: CPT, 2012), 142.

point (the pentecostal principle), and a unique vision (emergence); these appear to be the unifying characteristics he supports. His methodology both makes sense of, and reckons with, as Yong argues, pentecostalism's complexity and diversity as a movement, and in so doing, makes room for a comfortability with a breadth of approaches and a variety of outcomes.[61] Given much of this thesis is concerned with revealing any latent (implicit) pentecostal ethical method, Wariboko, after elaborating on "the pentecostal principle" asserts that "true method [...] falls within the treatment of the pentecostal principle itself; for the method is the exposition of the ideals and lived actuality of a community in which the pentecostal spirit dwells".[62]

3.2.3 Murray Dempster: Old Testament Ethics and the Church

In the spirit of developing a pentecostal social ethic, Murray Dempster endeavours to "inspire, direct, and validate"[63] pentecostal pursuit of social justice. Overall, his work makes a reasonable case *that* pentecostals consider social ethics to be at the core of their ministry without necessarily advancing *what* pentecostal social ethics might look like beyond the call to "establish justice". Despite the lack of specifics, he argues that biblical justice and Spirit Baptism underpin both personal holiness and a social dimension to ecclesial ethics, primarily through the creation of an alternative community rather than through adherence to biblical injunctions. This focus is commensurate with Smith's and Wariboko's contributions, who have also avoided "evangelical"-sounding ethics while demonstrating both a biblical foundation and theological continuity with the pentecostal tradition.

Dempster's arguments cluster around three approaches: firstly, a description of five themes in the Old Testament which provide the theological architecture undergirding a pentecostal social ethic. The description includes the theocentric foundations of the Old Testament, the doctrine of the *imago Dei*, the covenants, the prophetic tradition, and the Jubilee teachings and customs. Secondly, Dempster claims that the organising principle of

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[61] Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 22.

[62] Wariboko, *Pentecostal Principle*, 160.

[63] Dempster, "Pentecostal Social Concern," 129.

pentecostal social ethics is Spirit Baptism and argues that it allows an adequate interpretation of Old Testament accounts of justice to structure a pentecostal social ethic. His third and final approach is ecclesiological, arguing that evangelism and social concern could be "integrated into a wholistic theology of church ministry grounded in the kingdom of God and empowered by the Spirit [by reformulating] the threefold ministry of the church—*kerygmatic*, *koinoniac*, and *diakonic*".[64] I will briefly address his three claims in this order.[65]

Beginning with Old Testament biblical ethics, Dempster firstly argues that the theocentric foundations of the Old Testament provide a platform for social justice, not only because God was at the centre of each sphere of Jewish life (including social, political, and economic), but also because the expansion of Israel's view of God's character over time gave rise to the moral traditions that instantiated themselves in the corporate moral life. In summary, social concern was "brought into existence and kept alive by a deep moral conviction that acts of charity and the pursuit of social justice give tangible witness to God's own ethical character and to God's will for society".[66]

Secondly, social ethics can be grounded on theological anthropology, particularly the doctrine of the *imago Dei.* Each human being is a "divine image-bearer [and] each person possesses a unique value to God".[67] While human dignity is not an idea unique to Christianity, in Christianity this dignity emerges from humanity's relationship to its maker. It does not arise from intra-human relationships, nor from social value ascribed by human communities.[68]

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[64] Murray Dempster, "Evangelism, Social Concern, and the Kingdom of God," in Dempster, Klaus, and Petersen, *Called and Empowered*, 24.

[65] Eleanor Lewis suggests that *Called and Empowered*, as a volume, failed to live up to its ecumenical promise, but describes the contributions as "refreshing" and "beneficial" for those seeking to refine the stereotypes of pentecostal practice, including its reputation for "face-value reading of the Scriptures". Eleanor V. Lewis, review of *Called and Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective*, edited by Murray A. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, and Douglas Petersen, *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 21, no. 1 (1995): 131.

[66] Dempster, "Pentecostal Social Concern," 130–31.

[67] Ibid., 132.

[68] Ibid., 133.

Thirdly, Dempster argues that the covenantal nature of the Old Testament supplies the intelligibility for interpreting the legal, moral, and social requirements of the people of God. For example, he proposes that the "presence of the poor provided a constant opportunity for Israel to demonstrate its loyalty to the covenant".[69] The commandments therefore carry meaning that can only be fully intelligible when married to an understanding of the covenantal context. Incidentally, this narrative rationality supplies moral significance to the legal texts beyond a simple prescriptive ethic.

Dempster's fourth argument regarding an Old Testament foundation for social ethics considers the prophetic tradition and its attendant pleas for justice and for a return to the moral law of the Mosaic covenant.[70] Fifthly and finally, he considers the Jubilee teachings which encompass "the institutions of the Jubilee Year, the Sabbath Year, the law of tithing and the law of gleaning",[71] each of which were established to ensure the existence of charity and economic mobility for the poverty-stricken and downtrodden. Although these traditions might not have been perfect mechanisms to resolve all of Israel's economic challenges, they embedded a concern for justice within Israel's legal framework and social value system.[72]

Dempster's social ethics could prove difficult to apply practically, given the historical distance between the Old Testament and contemporary pentecostalism, but he nevertheless demonstrates that a considered approach to Scripture that encompasses interpretive strategies, such as the historical-critical method, yields ethical insight that surpasses simplistic divine command methodology. This approach sustains a high view of Scripture while allowing for the application of biblical morality beyond issues directly addressed in the Bible.

Dempster's second contribution is his proposal for an "organizing principle" or "angular vision" for pentecostals to organise their social ethic—Spirit Baptism.[73] He leans

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[69] Ibid., 136.

[70] Ibid., 138.

[71] Ibid., 143.

[72] Ibid., 145.

[73] Ibid., 146. Dempster also refers to Stronstrad's work on the integration of the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost with the Old Testament conception of social justice. See Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1984), 49.

heavily on Stronstrad's work to argue for continuity between the testaments, through the work of the Spirit to establish a revived Old Testament community. The new community delivers on social justice, not by re-establishing historical institutions, but by altering the entrenched anthropological realities in the present.[74] Although Dempster highlights both Spirit Baptism and economic idealism, they remain I think two separate arguments welded together and each one could be made comfortably on its own merit. The former is a type of New Testament theology calling for the creation of a new community equipped to reckon with the moral landscape of the day, and the latter, a type of biblical ethics recalling the moral expectations of the historic people of God. Given the "lynchpin" of Spirit Baptism can hold these positions together in Dempster's mind, it becomes apparent that his arguments support an integrity and continuity to the moral value of the Scriptures that supersedes isolated appeals to moral commandments. This continuity is demonstrated in the mission and ministry of the church in his third and final approach to pentecostal ethics, which considers the three dimensions of ecclesial ministry: the *kerygmatic*, *koinoniac*, and *diakonic.*

Regarding the kerygmatic dimension, Dempster suggests that the preaching of the "Kingdom" has been in some cases subsumed "under" the "plan of salvation" and Jesus' mission has been perpetuated while negating the broader proclamation and expansive kerygmatic substance that characterised his ministry. Furthermore, preaching is critical in shaping the moral identity of believers and additionally it casts a vision of a new moral

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[74] "Luke highlights his portrayal of the charismatic community as an expression of justice structured by the Spirit's power in the following manner. In Acts 2, the gender distinctions of male and female were overcome by the empowerment of the Spirit. In Acts 4 and 5, the economic distinctions between rich and poor were overcome in the economic koinonia established by the power of the Spirit. In Acts 10, the cultural distinctions between Jew and Gentile were overcome within the Christian community by the coming of the Spirit. In Acts 19, the religious distinctions between the disciples of Jesus and the disciples of John the Baptist were overcome by the power of the Spirit to instigate the first Christian ecumenism. By the time the story of the Acts concludes, the gospel has gone unbounded throughout the world by means of the Spirit-empowered apostolic community." Dempster, "Pentecostal Social Concern," 148. For a similar argument, see also Dempster, Klaus, and Petersen, *Called and Empowered*, 23–24.

world.[75] A "restored New Testament Apostolic Church" both calls its hearers to partake in the missionary work of eternal salvation and works as a catalyst realising the reign of God immanently through social change.[76] In this sense, social justice can and often will be preceded by individual transformation.[77]

The *koinoniac* dimension of ecclesial life is primarily concerned with the activities that "strengthen its own congregational life, moral bondedness and spiritual unity".[78] In Dempster's mind, the church's practices, including an inclusive communion and the distribution of the charismata, serve to remind us of the new social order which the

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[75] For example, in summarising some of the historical positions held by pentecostals on war, violence and pacifism, Dempster discovered that "the arguments used by those Pentecostals who were absolute pacifists in advocating Christian pacifism reflected a variety of theological and ethical convictions". Dempster, "Crossing Borders," 123. Dempster also suggests that the use of a wide variety of arguments indicates that pacifism was not necessarily the majority position, as the writing seems to adopt a persuasive character. Alexander draws the opposite conclusion, arguing that the public fallout potentially caused by publishing such a countercultural argument was not worth it, unless it was for an already strongly held position. See P. Alexander, *Peace to War*, 38–41. Dempster was, however, intensely critical of the AG's lack of biblical arguments and the supremacy of philosophical and political rationales in the revised positions on war and military service that emerged later in the 20th century. He declares this to be an "utter embarrassment to people who give first priority in a 'Statement of Faith' to affirming the authority of Scripture". Murray Dempster, "Peacetime Draft Registration and Pentecostal Moral Conscience," *Agora* 1 (Spring 1980): 3. He recognises several distinct arguments used to undergird the AG's ethical position. The first argument, which claims "pacifism was part of the restoration of the true apostolic faith", finds resonance with this kerygmatic dimension. Dempster, "Crossing Borders," 124. Other words used to describe the AG's early ecclesiology were "primitive", "radical" and "restorationist". P. Alexander, *Peace to War*, 89–90.

[76] "In hearing the gospel, the poor can gain a new sense of who they really are and can be empowered to begin the struggle for justice." Dempster, Klaus, and Petersen, *Called and Empowered*, 24–27.

[77] For example, Alexander writes: "Pentecostal pacifists often appealed to the transformation of one's identity and citizenship to explain their nonviolence". P. Alexander, "Speaking in the Tongues of Nonviolence," 3.

[78] Dempster, Klaus, and Petersen, *Called and Empowered*, 27. Spirit Baptism is one such activity that fuels practices providing a communal identity and formative spirituality, in addition to serving as a basis for mobilisation for the kerygmatic ministry described above.

church represents.[79] Although Dempster recognises that this "koinonia" is a "microcosm of what God wills for society [, the] Spirit's charismatic restructuring of the church"[80] undermines the injustice of existing structures in a significant way that emanates a powerful social witness. In this sense, the church embodies a moral tradition rather than prescribes one, a disposition far more resonant with virtue ethics than evangelical forms of absolutism.[81]

Dempster considers the final dimension in his argument in light of the previous two, noting that a church which preaches the kingdom (the kerygmatic ministry) embodies the kingdom (the *koinoniac* ministry), but if it does not practice "kingdom service" it lacks the *diakonic* ministry.[82] He divides this dimension into two distinct expressions, noting that "kingdom service" can include social welfare (caring for the immediate needs of people), and social action (disrupting and transforming the structures that enable injustice to manifest).[83] Dempster also warns that social welfare might constitute a more significant part of the mission than we care to admit, given the propensity to adopt secular agendas of justice without considering the ecclesial mandate

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[79] Although ironically, one of Dempster's key texts is criticised for the absence of female contributors. Lewis, review of *Called and Empowered*, 132; Kenneth D. Gill, review of *Called and Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective*, edited by Murray A. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, and Douglas Petersen, *Missiology* 21, no. 3 (1993): 374.

[80] Dempster, Klaus, and Petersen, *Called and Empowered*, 28–29.

[81] Dempster notes the resonance of this position with Stanley Hauerwas's argument, that the church is, rather than has, a social ethic. Hauerwas's argument will be expanded upon a closer look at his ecclesiological ethics. Ibid., 28–31. See also Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 99–102.

[82] He describes this third dimension as "theological activity that expresses God's love for all people everywhere". Dempster, Klaus, and Petersen, *Called and Empowered*, 33.

[83] In his summary of Pentecostal objections to military violence, he notes that early Pentecostal pacifists categorised war as a type of structural sin in need of prophetic rebuke and systemic transformation. Dempster, "Crossing Borders," 129. He also summarises the objections to war that were grounded on the value of human life. Ibid., 135–38. Regarding the former he suggests that relying on public policy to alleviate the concerns of the poor as a class of people suggests "an underdeveloped social conscience [and] may be a way of avoiding tangible personal involvement in the lives of the poor", indicating a preference for a hands-on approach to social welfare. Dempster, Klaus, and Petersen, *Called and Empowered*, 34.

to care for the poor, widow, and orphan.[84] Regarding social action, his major contention is that the church recognises that its kingdom ministry exists within a socio-political environment and that "the church can reserve its right to say no to Caesar through organised action-plans when politically legitimised public policy and social behaviours are out of harmony with God's will and character".[85] Further, Dempster suggests that the church can also engage in creative reform through politics and/or establish parallel social structures.[86] For example, Augustus Cerillo suggests that the pentecostal church's activities have sometimes:

> served as private, voluntary "affirmative action" agencies [which] have enfolded into their churches, schools, and colleges the educationally and culturally marginalized, the economically and socially displaced, and more generally other outsiders to the mainstream of American and third world societies.[87]

Overall, this third approach to pentecostal ethics seeks to unify the proclamation of the church with its internal practices and social justice initiatives. While Dempster does not indicate the substance of moral positions that illuminate how "establishing justice" may manifest, he demonstrates a sensitivity toward social justice and its place in the pentecostal framework, tacitly rebuking pentecostal practice that may exclude it.

In summary, a synthesis of Dempster's contributions suggests that there is a framework for how the Bible could be interpreted in the community that is witnessing to the kingdom through its ecclesial service. He also clearly argues how a pentecostal ethic can be biblical without being biblicist—a way of holding a tension between the Methodist and evangelical histories that have instantiated themselves into the pentecostal milieu. The simultaneous prioritisation of Scripture and elevation of the ecclesial community

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[84] Dempster seems to consider the social mission vulnerable to secular agendas, a position shared by ethicists outside of the pentecostal tradition such as Stanley Hauerwas. Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 100.

[85] Dempster, Klaus, and Petersen, *Called and Empowered*, 35.

[86] Dempster labels influence of this stripe as "desacralizing [the] political power of human governments." Ibid., 35–38.

[87] Cerillo Jr., "Called and Empowered," 113.

through the continuity provided by Spirit Baptism suggest that the tensions between holiness and biblical literalism (evangelicalism) can be integrated into a vision that reconciles the ideas of the church as "set apart" and as necessarily part of, and actively ministering to, the world—towards its eschatological future.

3.2.4 Paul Alexander: Pentecostal Social Ethics and Nonviolence

An appropriate scholar to follow Dempster in this analysis is Paul Alexander, another ethicist who writes extensively on pentecostal social justice.[88] Alexander's contributions to pentecostal ethics are critical to an overall understanding of the pentecostal moral landscape, particularly given that he argues that a pacifist heritage has been lost and ought to be reclaimed, that peacemaking ought to be a pentecostal ethical distinctive, and that there is currently an unfolding discussion in pentecostal circles regarding sexuality that ought not to be ignored. His arguments therefore claim to be able to correct the problems of the past and to shape the ethics of the future. I will explore these three dimensions to his work in that order.

What sets Alexander apart is the explicit pursuit of specific ethical issues, most notably pacifism and nonviolence. In *Pentecostals and Nonviolence*, Paul Alexander and others outline the historical relationship between pentecostals and nonviolence as well as the attendant theological and pastoral considerations, with a view to locating "peacemaking and justice seeking [as] part of the contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic movement".[89] His primary objectives include: highlighting the historical record which indicates that early pentecostals were inherently and explicitly pacifists; accounting for the institutional developments that drew some pentecostal denominations away from this moral distinctive; and calling for a resurgence of peacemaking amongst pentecostal ethical priorities in the 21st century, even going so far as to suggest that if pentecostals

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[88] Like Smith and Dempster, Alexander is not indifferent toward the social and ethical implications of texts such as Acts 2 and its attendant eschatological manifestations. For him, it is the same spirit-empowered courage that overwhelmed the 120 in the upper room that should fuel the desire to engage in significant social issues, including speaking out "about the idolatry of nationalism, the hoarding of wealth at the expense of the poor, and the dependence on military strength and violence for security". P. Alexander, "Speaking in the Tongues of Nonviolence," 11.

[89] P. Alexander, *Pentecostals and Nonviolence*, xix.

moved toward a just-war position, this "would be a positive development […] since just war tradition begins with a strong presumption against violence".[90]

Alexander argues that the degree to which pacifism formed a significant theme of early pentecostal theology and practice has been understated. To make his point explicit, he argues that the AG in particular persisted in their position, which survived two world wars and even sustained itself in the aftermath of World War II, when the AG encountered an opportunity to edit their pacifist doctrine.[91] Alexander laments the revisionism around the early pentecostal community's convictions regarding pacifism and proposes that his analysis "provides Pentecostals today with a 'usable past' that, while certainly not flawless, can be legitimately employed to help them imagine pentecostal practices of faithfulness that are less nationalistic and less violent than those of the contemporary American AG".[92]

Alexander's second major contribution is his account of the AG's transition from a peace church to a pro-war church, which took place in just a few decades.[93] He proceeds by addressing three matters: why the AG were pacifists in the first place, why this position was temporary, and which position—peacemaking or war-making—best fits the pentecostal ethos.[94] In the AG's context, the claims to be "Full Gospel" churches often

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[90] P. Alexander, "Speaking in the Tongues of Nonviolence," 13. While Dempster has primarily argued for a general disposition toward justice, Alexander argues for a particular moral position on violence. Though his scope is narrow, he has done a thorough job of articulating an example of pentecostal justice made manifest in an ethical conviction.

[91] Ibid., 6–10. See also P. Alexander, *Peace to War*, 36–38.

[92] Paul Nathan Alexander, "Prophetic 'Patriotic' Pentecostal Peacemaking: Early Assemblies of God Pacifism and the Twentieth Century," in *Pentecostals and Nonviolence*, 179–80. Here he is highlighting the historical problems within the Assemblies of God and the AG's capacity to sustain a coherent and consistent moral position, as well as contemporary scholarship's competence to correctly interpret the history.

[93] P. Alexander, *Peace to War*, 15.

[94] Ibid., 35. While the AG are the focus of his writing, he also credits the Church of God in Christ (COGIC), another Pentecostal denomination, with their uncompromising pacifist position during World War I. As the shedding of blood was contrary to the teachings of the Bible, COGIC forbade their congregants from participation in military combat despite significant government opposition, suspicion, and investigations into what was considered seditious behaviour. Ibid., 73–75.

included a pacifist message as part of the restorationist mantra fuelled particularly by the desire to be separate from the world and to restore the church to the purity of its historical iterations.[95] This tendency was encouraged by the influence of both the Quakers and the holiness movements, and influential individuals who defected from these denominations to join the pentecostals. Contrarily, the "disestablishmentarian tendencies of the Assemblies of God contributed to their pacifism, but the fact that some supported the government to the point of fighting led to a tension that eventually did away with the pacifist position".[96] Clearly the way pentecostals were communicating their ethical positions allowed for this diversity but did not guarantee that the pentecostal communities were not subjected to an attendant disunity. Shuman argues that returning to the "disestablishment disposition" of the early pentecostal churches could be achieved by distancing themselves, once again, from the social and political institutions that have infected the restorationist and separatist spirit.[97] Despite its institutional position, which remained unchanged, the strain between conflicting positions remained a reality.[98]

Alexander proposes that despite the fluctuations in the popularity of pacifist and pro-war positions, these in and of themselves bear no relevance to the theology that undergirds his personal position.[99] It is worthwhile mentioning, however, that his arguments presume that pentecostal ethics has been and is problematic. Citing numerous examples of extemporaneous adaptation and adoption of a diversity of positions, in establishing his case, he simultaneously undermines pentecostal ethics as a historical

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[95] Ibid., 107–13.

[96] Ibid., 117.

[97] He continued to argue that the more Pentecostals aligned themselves with government, their alignment to Scripture simultaneously declined. Shuman, "Pentecost and the End of Patriotism," 75–90. Shuman also subscribes to Stanley Hauerwas's work and argues that a re-emphasis on the Pentecostal Story will bring correction to the distortions that have arisen in Pentecostal social ethics in the 20th century and Hauerwas's contention that a life marred by violence is not one congruent with the "way of life presented in Jesus' life, death and resurrection". Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 25. Cited in Shuman, "Pentecost and the End of Patriotism," 92. The primacy of individual conscience on matters of military participation emerged during the American involvement in World War I, fuelled by articles published by European Christians in the *Evangel*.

[98] P. Alexander, *Peace to War*, 188–93.

[99] Ibid., 329.

discipline by demonstrating its inadequacies regarding his chosen moral issue. Despite this, it would be unreasonable to use his work in isolation to hijack the broader discipline, given his only objective has been to bring clarity and correction to a particular ethical conversation within the movement itself by developing an in-depth analysis of its own history and tradition.[100]

The Christocentric ethic of early pentecostals supplied the biblical arguments for pacifism, citing the life of Jesus as one of nonviolent resistance. Alexander's work outlines the AG's transition away from their pacifist roots, and although his writing focuses on one denomination (the Assemblies of God) in one nation (the United States of America), his critique of the AG's willingness to depart from their roots can also be strengthened by recognising that pacifism (or at least a high degree of suspicion toward militarism) is reasonably commonplace across Christian traditions—particularly given that whatever position is adopted, it must be reconciled with the life of Jesus.

Having reckoned with the history, Alexander presents a positive case for peacemaking, arguing that pacifism theologically stands as a pentecostal ethical distinctive.[101] Firstly, he argues that a "Pentecostal theology well-grounded in the scripture will prescribe peacemaking as a fundamental characteristic of Spirit-filled communities [along with] seeking justice for the poor, promoting reconciliation between divided brothers and sisters in the faith, and reserving ultimate allegiance for God

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[100]Alexander argues that beyond the theological and practical distinctives of early Pentecostalism, such as glossolalia, the formative communities embodied moral sensibilities that at least in theory influenced their ethics. These included anti-nationalistic and anti-violence positions. Alexander, "Prophetic 'Patriotic' Pentecostal Peacemaking," 172. This is to relate to the broader power that pentecostalism held to act as a catalyst for social transformation. This included "interethnic worship when doing so could get them killed; [furthermore] they promoted women in ministry and leadership before women could vote in the United States; and they opposed war vociferously even though it meant they were tarred, feathered, jailed and shot". P. Alexander, "Speaking in the Tongues of Nonviolence," 1.

[101] He acknowledges that some of the moral dissonances in Pentecostalism, such as the conviction regarding the value of human life while in some cases simultaneously holding a pro-war position, are a result of the "privatization of Pentecostalism", often to the detriment of the consideration of social issues. Here he seems to be arguing for a consistent and uniform approach in ethics that is dependent on a coherent methodology.

[including] economic and social issues such as consumerism and globalization".[102] By citing examples such as Jesus' rejection of the Zealot movements and his refusal to retaliate violently, even when provoked, Alexander argues that pentecostal peacemaking has a Christological origin. He states, "a healthy Christology allows plenty of room for action but no room for violence, regardless of the alleged good that could come from it".[103]

Secondly, he invokes the Holy Spirit as the means by which to practise what pacifist Christology demands of us. This particular methodology is explicitly applied in Alexander's work in the context of peacemaking, but presumably he would support this approach to sustain other ethical positions.[104] In his thinking, the Lukan priority of Spirit enabling gives the model by which the believer is empowered to do things he or she would not ordinarily do and to speak in ways he or she would not ordinarily speak. He synthesises them as follows: "Christology shows us how to live and die while making peace, pneumatology enables it. This is a christomorphic pneumatology".[105] This twofold theological approach establishes the ethical standard, and simultaneously provides the power to achieve it. While this approach may seem simplistic, it does supply a "pentecostal model" for approaching ethics and, commensurate with his other work, it supplies a theological foundation for his pacifist position.

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[102] P. Alexander, "Jesus-Shaped and Spirit-Empowered Peace with Justice: Toward a Christomorphic Pneumatology," in *Pentecostals and Nonviolence*, 193.

[103] Ibid., 197.

[104] In their ethnographic study on dangerous peacemaking, Robert Welsh and Paul Alexander describe an example of this principle at work from the testimony of a Colombian participant in their study: "This story points to the theo-ethical perspective that the Spirit of God leads communities to take significant non-violent risks in order for there to be greater peace and justice in society". Robert Welsh and Paul Nathan Alexander, "Exemplars of Godly Justice: Peacemaking and Justice Seeking in Dangerous Contexts," *PentecoStudies* 11, no. 1 (2012): 69. Further to this, in the same study, "boundary collapsing" was identified as a theological and ethical theme that characterised those groups working in these contexts. They "perceived boundaries as arbitrary. They believed that the message of Jesus teaches them to cross and, further, to collapse boundaries of power structures, authority and sociocultural dominations". Ibid., 76.

[105] P. Alexander, "Jesus-Shaped and Spirit-Empowered Peace," 201–2.

Thirdly, Alexander proposes that peacemaking performs a threefold function, with evangelical, ecumenical and pentecostal dimensions. Peacemaking is an opportunity to witness to unbelievers, unify the church, and maintain faithfulness to Spirit Baptism.[106] His comments regarding pentecostal spirituality highlight both self-sacrifice and openness and suggest that "the community of believers [be] divinely empowered to live the good news publicly and socially, as makers of peace, even at the possible expense of ourselves because we truly trust in signs and wonders and answers to prayer".[107] He reaffirms what has been argued earlier in this thesis that his theology of peacemaking is completely consistent with pentecostalism's historical patterns of pacifism and conscientious objection, calling upon the global pentecostal communities to unite around this Christological priority. Incidentally, he cites ethicists John Howard Yoder, Stanley Hauerwas, and Glen Stassen, that is, non-pentecostals who also share these priorities.[108]

The final example of Alexander's pentecostal ethics emerges from his presidential address to the Society for Pentecostal Studies (SPS) in 2013, where he spoke to issues of race, gender, and sexuality. In approaching these contentious topics, he acknowledges that pentecostalism emerged in the United States at a time of post-reconstruction racial tension and recognises that many of his pentecostal colleagues have written on this topic, but he declined to cite them, not wanting "to implicate anyone as a collaborator".[109] This caution is an indicator of the fragility of the movement in the United States around these contentious topics. His argument begins by exploring race and "whiteness", and uses the oppression narratives of Exodus to make his point explicit. He argues that there are several ways one could embody whiteness, and therefore several ways in which one could be an oppressor.[110]

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[106] P. Alexander, "Spirit-Empowered Peacemaking," 306.

[107] Ibid., 298. Daniela Augustine does not underestimate prayer either, perceiving it to be "world-mending […] a divine-human partnership—breathing, speaking, groaning, and moving with, in, and through the Spirit [but also] world-making, speaking forth future beauty and hope within the cosmos". Augustine, *Spirit and the Common Good*, 54.

[108] P. Alexander, "Spirit-Empowered Peacemaking," 309.

[109] P. Alexander, "Presidential Address 2013," 320.

[110] Ibid., 326.

He extrapolates his arguments through various identity groupings and arrives at the LGBT+ realities that mark the closing of his paper. Beginning by recognising the generic truism that a plethora of sexual identity groups attend churches, there are many who choose to worship in pentecostal communities. Furthermore, he identifies that within pentecostal churches, there are a myriad of moral views on these challenges, even if they are not articulated in any formal documentation. Given the diversity, he proposes that members of the Society for Pentecostal Studies continue to "engage these issues openly and without fear of reprisal".[111] I think the argument for an openness to these discussions is the critical conclusion of his paper, not that a particular view prevail over others. This conclusion, in and of itself, is significant. Given his candid articulation on what he believes to be an unquestionable pentecostal position on pacifism, he is evidently remarkably open to the development and evolutions of other consistently held ethical positions that have stood the test of time.

Alexander's social ethics clearly place a premium on historical traditions as morally informative. This historical orientation is demonstrated by his emphasis on how distinctives have been diluted and lost over the course of time and have been caused by the influences of other churches, in this case, pacifism and evangelicalism. In this regard he places himself in the holiness and somewhat separatist traditions of pentecostal ethics, rather than in the evangelical wing. The concern with evangelicalism, however, is not its ethical methodology per se, but more so the cultural amalgamation of particular denominations with secular powers. For an ethicist who leans heavily on tradition and history, his openness to an evolving position on sexual ethics is intriguing, and indicates that he, at least, can hold a tension between concrete historical traditions and fluid progressive trajectories in moral theology.

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[111] Ibid., 343.

3.2.5 Daniela Augustine: Pentecostal Economics and Social Transformation

If Dempster and Alexander are examples of "social" ethicists with a clear social agenda, Daniela Augustine, in contrast, is a theological ethicist with a clear theological agenda.[112] This is not to say that either category necessarily excludes the other. For example, Augustine's work identifies "social transformation" as the explicit "fruit" of her theological work. In particular, she is known for espousing pentecostal economic ethics. To that end I will consider her general approach to pentecostal ethics, including its economic orientation; her theology of humanity—particularly the *imago Dei*; and finally, her theology of hospitality and its vision of the alternate ecclesial reality.

The general approach to pentecostal ethics which seems to emerge throughout her writing includes a re-articulation of the body politic in light of the social vision of the church, a critique of economic terms and values that exist and form the basis of economic ethics, and a unique pentecostal orientation toward the world and its attendant issues. Firstly, the social vision that permeates her corpus is formulated in the thesis statement: "Christianity is concerned with the birth and formation of a new socio-political reality—a new kingdom, a new polis (the City of God) and its embodiment on earth in a new ethnos: The Church, the Body of Christ, the communion of saints in which God remains 'with us' through the Holy Spirit".[113] In Augustine's mind, this socio-political vision is made possible only through the "kenosis of the Spirit",[114] which supplies both the opportunity and power to implement such a broad vision. This view of course resonates with both Dempster's

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[112] Augustine's writing very much reflects her geographical and ethnic context. Given her Eastern European background and her pentecostal affiliation, Augustine provides a unique vantage point for pentecostal ethics, within which emerges a strong command of Eastern Orthodox Christian theology and the social and political conditions of the eastern-bloc countries (formally beholden to the influence of Soviet economics), buttressed by extensive field research in Eastern Slavonia. Augustine, *Spirit and the Common Good*, 1–12.

[113] Daniela C. Augustine, *At the Crossroads of Social Transformation: An Eastern-European Theological Perspective* (Saarbrucken, Germany: LAP Lambert, 2010), vi. From a Pentecostal perspective, the Pentecost event secures the extension of Christ's body on earth through the church. Ibid., 20.

[114] Augustine, *Pentecost, Hospitality, and Transfiguration*, 142.

vision of pentecostal ecclesial formation and Alexander's "christomorphic pneumatology"—the way of life exemplified by Christ and enabled by the Spirit.[115]

Secondly, Augustine's concern for economic and ecological justice is explained through the prism of her extensive writing on economic ethics.[116] In summary, she proposes that justice be achieved via "responsible consumption" and "internal restraints" maintaining the priority of personal transformation. She quotes Jonathan Sacks's challenge, "we can change the world if we can change ourselves".[117] For her, the pentecostal communal economic model that reflects the "spirit-filled koinonia" is articulated in the book of Acts.[118] In contemporary economic terms, "the individual" redistributes his or her wealth, rather than the individual having his or her wealth redistributed. Otherwise, you may have justice without love, welfare without sacrifice, and/or you may have economic equilibrium without transformational holiness. For Augustine, "self-redistribution" is a mark of hospitality—the will of the Father, the extension of Christ's work, and a gift of the Spirit.[119]

Thirdly, the mobile spirituality, characteristic of pentecostals, propels them from reflection to interaction and then from interaction to action, (prayer to witness to transformation), formulating an effective ethic from a reflective one.[120] This trajectory seems to be a particular methodological assumption that undergirds much of Augustine's economic ethics and pentecostal social transformation more broadly. Like many other pentecostal theologians, she accepts that it is incumbent upon the church, as the body of

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[115] See P. Alexander, "Jesus-Shaped and Spirit-Empowered Peace," 201–2.

[116] In Augustine's view, capitalism and socialism, both systems based on assumed competition on limited resources, fail to foster the type of radical civic virtue she is espousing. The former seeks economic independence from the state and the latter embraces economic dependence on the state, neither of which encourages pneumatic hospitality and perichoretic interdependence.

[117] Jonathan Sacks, *The Politics of Hope* (London: Vintage, 2001), 268. Quoted in Augustine, *Pentecost, Hospitality, and Transfiguration*, 12. It seems clear that this type of transformation could be understood as an expression of holiness, cultivating the "civic virtue of fasting from oneself on behalf of the fellow human and the rest of nature". Daniela C. Augustine, "Pentecostal Communal Economics and the Household of God," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 19 (2010): 224.

[118] Augustine, "Pentecostal Communal Economics," 224.

[119] Ibid., 226, 31.

[120] Augustine, *Pentecost, Hospitality, and Transfiguration*, 25.

Christ made manifest, to continue in Christ's mission, and to allow the Spirit to crystallise a "Christ-like consciousness".[121] These three generalities provide the necessary framework through which to understand Augustine's corpus. Of particular interest is the ecclesial vision she points to, an emphasis on personal transformation, and a pragmatic orientation toward social ethics, all three of which suggest that the evangelical school has had little influence on her ethics.

A second central theme of Augustine's writing is the *imago Dei*, which informs her pentecostal ethics both ontologically and teleologically. She describes the ontological value of humanity in light of her economic ethics and ecclesial vision, functioning to sustain the relationship between humanity's value and activities. An example emerges in her critique of capitalism, which renders "non-marketable populace [...] alienated from the cycle of production and consumption, by virtue of lacking market value".[122] Those alienated from the household in this regard include "The weak, the young, the elderly and the handicapped".[123] Christianity, she argues, proposes an alternative vision of the household.[124] "The Christian vision of household insists on the practice of politics and economics as an external materialization of inner spiritual life [...] insisting on taking responsibility for the wellbeing of the other and cultivating the civic virtue of fasting from oneself on behalf of the fellow human and the rest of creation",[125] creating an "ecclesial

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[121] Daniela C. Augustine, "Pentecost and the Hospitality of God as Justice for the Others," *Brethren Life and Thought* 57, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 19.

[122] Augustine, *Pentecost, Hospitality, and Transfiguration*, 75–76.

[123] Ibid. Theologically speaking, she proposes that Pentecost "deconstructs the notion of power-mapping the world by fragmenting it into centers and margins, and dissolves social stigmas and apologetics of stratification and exclusion". Ibid., 142. This in essence informs social and philosophical responses to the economic problem notes above.

[124] This contrasts with both the capitalist and the Marxist models, which are both motivated by self-interest and individualism. Augustine, "Pentecostal Communal Economics," 238–39.

[125] Augustine, *Pentecost, Hospitality, and Transfiguration*, 77–78.

macro-anthropos".[126] This, she proposes, is the transfiguration of humanity into the likeness of God.[127]

A slightly broader view is espoused in Augustine's theological assessment of Cain's violence against Abel. Not only does Cain murder Abel (a fellow image-bearer, *and* close kin), he "buries his brother's face in the ground, covering the image (and his crime) together with the image bearer, while denying responsibility for its disappearance".[128] She not only uses this story to emphasise humanity's propensity toward violence but also to make a theological point that, similarly in the Garden of Eden, God sought after his human companions. With the question "Where are you?" God intensifies the question with a social dimension by directing the question not to Abel himself, but to his brother, Cain. Augustine argues that Cain's answer and question back to God "Am I my brother's keeper?" "haunts us with its desensitization toward violence and injustice against the other",[129] reminding us that not only is all fratricide murder, but all murder is fratricide.

Augustine is hinting at the origin of human injustice (and justice) being found within the image-bearers themselves, consequently challenging any kind of move toward reconciliation and liberation sourced from anything other than the "struggle for the common good [which] has to be won first within the human heart".[130] In "classical pentecostal vocabulary" she is referring to the importance of personal transformation and its attendant holy living. Furthermore, Augustine writes that holiness is achieved through "a continual Christic transfiguration through sanctification of personal will and desires, in fasting from self on behalf of the other as an expression of incarnated love toward God and neighbour".[131] Only when combined with the economic justice incumbent upon the "prophetic vocation" and the totalising reliance on the one who "alone gives and sustains

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[126] Daniela C. Augustine, "Image, Spirit and Theosis: Imaging God in an Image-Distorting World," in *The Image of God in an Image Driven Age: Explorations in Theological Anthropology*, ed. Beth F. Jones and Jeffrey W. Barbeau (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2016), 174; emphasis in original.

[127] Augustine, *Pentecost, Hospitality, and Transfiguration*, 78.

[128] Augustine, *Spirit and the Common Good*, 70.

[129] Ibid.

[130] "[A]part from that no social contract, no legal coercion would guarantee sustainable, communal flourishing in uncompromised commitment to mutual 'safekeeping.'" Ibid., 72.

[131] Augustine, "Image, Spirit and Theosis," 174.

life, in whom life finds its meaning and telos, and before whom [...] we are accountable for sharing this life"[132] is the social mission both authentic and effective.

Returning to the *imago Dei*, Augustine emphasises that this attribute forms the basis for "social equality", "comprehensive justice", and "omnipresent peace": all interrelated aspects (and prerequisites) of each other. Like many others, she seems to be collapsing various categories of ethics (such as social, communal, personal) rather than segmenting them, ensuring that one does not gain prominence at the expense of the other.[133] Her reliance on the Old Testament to substantiate her arguments ensures that the communal implications (and benefits) of justice, equality, and peace, bring some helpful synthesis between the holiness expectations and the communal obligations of the people of God. Note that she has not excluded the biblical text from her arguments thus far, but this example uses a clear scriptural framework to substantiate her position. These theological arguments are more than able to sustain appeals to ethical positions grounded on theological anthropology, and consequentially open a myriad of critical ethical conversations.

The third element of Augustine's pentecostal ethics involves her theology of hospitality, elaborated in *Pentecost, Hospitality, and Transfiguration*. She describes the social ethic of the church as being a unique generator of social change, emerging from the Upper Room experience and into "the public space of the city [...] to participate in the civic discourse about the welfare of its citizens".[134] The church's social ethic, hospitality, can be understood and applied in a variety of ways, including on the economic and social landscape. Given this, I will summarise her arguments on the economic frontier, particularly globalisation; and the social frontier, particularly cultural diversity.

Similar to Wariboko, Augustine recognises that globalisation has triggered the arrival of the world "in our backyard along with the realization that we all share a global

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[132] Augustine, *Spirit and the Common Good*, 75.

[133] Ibid., 108. Indeed, she later notes that "As equality births justice, so justice bears peace". Ibid., 113.

[134] Augustine, *Pentecost, Hospitality, and Transfiguration*, 25. Elsewhere, Augustine describes the significance of Pentecost as its establishment of "the church as the visible icon of the Trinity on earth". Augustine, *Spirit and the Common Good*, 15.

household and a responsibility for its health and functionality".[135] The shrinking of the world forces the Christian community to confront the issues that are made visible that, before this shift in proximity, had remained distant.[136] The question becomes: What does pentecostal hospitality look like in a globalised world? More specifically, how does pentecostal hospitality transform the world in economic terms considering the knowledge and proximity provided by globalisation? A helpful response appears in her work on social transformation:

> The structures producing and maintaining poverty must be confronted with the care for the poor and the needy through a responsible redistribution of wealth and investment in their re-socialization and enculturation in the Christian community (including their education and training), thus giving them a new social meaning, a tangible hope, a future and a personal significance for the community.[137]

Given that globalisation also calls attention to a macro-vision of the world, Augustine's theology of justice and hospitality extends to the "entire household", including its non-anthropic dimensions. She incorporates ecological justice into her discourse and from a theological perspective notes the centrality of the Sabbath for establishing rest, a powerful principle in agrarian cultures then magnified in the Sabbath Year and Sabbath Jubilee.[138] The overall point that she seems to be arguing for is that hospitality and justice are, firstly, principles instantiated into the created order, and

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[135] Augustine, *Pentecost, Hospitality, and Transfiguration*, 43. On occasion she refers to the household as "planetary", drawing attention to this interconnectivity, bonding economic and ecological dimensions. Augustine, "Pentecostal Communal Economics," 221.

[136] Augustine describes this as an "escalating compression of time and space". Augustine, "Pentecostal Communal Economics," 220.

[137] Augustine, *Crossroads*, 178.

[138] See also Daniela C. Augustine, "The Liturgical Teleology of Human Creativity and the City of God as the Theosis of Culture," *Cultural Encounters* 10, no. 2 (2014): 15.

secondly, in our following of these principles in relation to "the other", particularly with regard to economics, we reflect the image of the God of the created order.[139]

The realities of globalisation extend beyond economics and into cultural dimensions, which in Augustine's mind are best explained through the story of Babel. Unlike Joel Shuman, who identifies Babel as a symbol of division and confusion, Augustine proposes that Babel represents "Humanity's turning away from its vocation to the other and concentrating its creative energies into a monolithic, homogenizing attempt at self-deification".[140] The counterpoint of Pentecost therefore supplies the re-energising of humanity's quest to know the other by knowing their "language", metaphorically. By embracing the particularities of "otherness", Pentecost is, in Augustine's estimation, the "antidote to the age-old temptation to employ Babel's blueprint in human cultural world-making".[141] In another article Augustine focuses on the significance of language at Pentecost, insisting on a cultural dynamic where the distinctiveness of each voice is

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[139] Augustine, *Pentecost, Hospitality, and Transfiguration*, 56. Elsewhere she describes humanity as "a restless, homesick creature, deeply imprinted with and haunted by the primordial memory of Eden as the lost home for which it has been created—the memory of shalom as harmonious wholeness in communion with God and neighbour". Augustine, *Spirit and the Common Good*, 25. This emphasises the universal, or as Augustine sometimes uses, "planetary", dimensions of an all-encompassing theology of justice. See also Augustine, "Pentecostal Communal Economics," 226, 32. She explains that "the same greed and self-indulgence that commodify the other and justify their savage exploitation underwrite the devastating exploitation of nature". Augustine, *Spirit and the Common Good*, 114. This further underwrites her argument that "concerns for economic justice have become closely linked with the demand for ecological justice". Augustine, "Pentecostal Communal Economics," 220. Alone this is not enough to develop a Pentecostal ethic of creation, but she does indicate some broad theological assumptions in her work such as commentary on the Genesis narratives where "we see God within the divine communal self not only creating a sanctuary for the possibility and flourishing of the other but also building a home for them. He takes time in carefully crafting and furnishing this home according to the physical needs of His creatures so that they may truly have access to life more abundant". Augustine, "Liturgical Teleology," 9. It is worth noting that Augustine is a minority voice on this issue among established Pentecostal scholarship, and like her writing challenging the traditional Pentecostal approaches to sexual ethics, issues of environmental justice are emergent in Pentecostal ethics.

[140] Augustine, *Spirit and the Common Good*, 46. See also Augustine, "Image, Spirit and Theosis," 182.

[141] Augustine, *Spirit and the Common Good*, 50.

maintained while creating a "multidimensional unity of oneself with the other".[142] For Augustine, there exists a type of "multi-cultural hospitality" that "is not natural—it is divine and supernatural [...] God becomes home for humanity so that, in return, humanity may make the world into a home for all [...] hospitality is welcoming the stranger at home without imposing upon them the demand 'to fit' in our space".[143] The theological ramifications for pentecostals are significant, given that the sustaining of diverse voices extends to all matters of practice, including ethics, and they suggest that a pentecostal ethic need not prioritise uniformity for it to be a legitimate brand of morality.

In conclusion, Augustine's work considers a "pentecostal approach" to ethics. Given her propensity to systematise, she has integrated a theology of humankind with a theology of the Holy Spirit and a theology of the church across her corpus while maintaining an emphasis on her speciality: economic ethics. She presents a "powerful deconstruction of materialism and self-indulging consumerism while affirming the goodness of creation's essential materiality [and additionally] challenging the notion of disembodied holiness as being antithetical to the vision and witness of Christ".[144] Her work clearly establishes a principle that holiness transforms the material reality. Additionally, her social ethics is derived from a theology of humanity and theology of hospitality, from which emerges a harmonising of the realities of globalisation with economic and social justice. She proposes that the church "be" an alternate reality that can incorporate cultural diversity without marginalisation or abolition.

This analysis indicates that she would not necessarily support evangelically informed ethics or political activism and that she would prioritise an ecclesial-pragmatic approach as opposed to a biblical literalist or a doctrinal one. Augustine's writing therefore suggests that the characteristics of pentecostal ethics should include emphasis on personal transformation, a celebration of diversity including a multiplicity of voices, and a decentralised ecclesiocentric practice.

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[142] Augustine, "Pentecost and the Hospitality of God," 20.

[143] Augustine, *Pentecost, Hospitality, and Transfiguration*, 45. In another publication she writes, "welcoming all foreigners, aliens, strangers literally on their own terms." Augustine, *Spirit and the Common Good*, 51. See also Augustine, "Pentecost and the Hospitality of God," 21.

[144] Augustine, *Spirit and the Common Good*, 206.

3.2.6 Daniel Castelo: Pentecostal Ethics and Spirituality

Daniel Castelo's work, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics*, emphasises the sociohistorical roots of pentecostalism, such as holiness, pacifism; its apolitical tendencies; revivalism; and its orientation toward the supernatural. He argues that much of the "moral substance" has shifted over the decades, but pentecostal spirituality has remained a relatively consistent phenomenon and could perhaps be incorporated into discourse regarding pentecostal ethics. Additionally, he argues that virtue ethics resonates with pentecostal ethics and its history in such a way that it can illuminate contemporary pentecostal moral sensibilities.

Castelo proposes that "early Pentecostals harboured certain impulses and intuitions that were quite important but that over time were diminished or reconfigured in light of a number of pressures".[145] This reconfiguration is hardly surprising given the historical fluidity of both pentecostal theology and practice. He tracks the trajectory of ethical discourse within the movement, consistently noting that many of the original priorities were hijacked by external influences that diminished the ethical task, highlighting pentecostalism's propensity to be easily influenced and hence pentecostal ethics' "difficult to pin down" status. Paul Alexander's historical analysis of pentecostal pacifism, outlined above, exemplifies this propensity. Nevertheless, Castelo's work is considered important, as pentecostal scholar Larry Sterling observes, since Castelo "positions Pentecostal spirituality within an ethical response",[146] indicating that there is something ethical about pentecostal spirituality (or vice versa) and, despite the fluidity of pentecostal ethics over time, pentecostal spirituality remains intact. Given this, Castelo rejects the notion that the remedy to the hijacking is to re-employ extra-denominational approaches to social ethics, as he finds "such work to be insufficiently methodologically attentive to the theological impulses and rationales that have traditionally driven and shaped Pentecostal life".[147] The implication here, although not clearly stated, is that

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[145] Ibid., 2.

[146] Larry Sterling, "A Pentecostal Ethic: A Discovery of Church of God Clergy Compliance of the Practical Commitments" (DMin thesis, Ashland Theological Seminary, OH, 2016). See also Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics*, 90.

[147] Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics*, 6.

whatever criterion is used to critique pentecostal ethics, it may not be playing by the same rules, rendering a critique structured around traditional approaches to Christian ethics insufficient to provide a thorough theological account of pentecostal ethics.

Like Sterling, Amos Yong recognises the importance of Castelo's work, particularly his emphasis on pentecostal spirituality. Yong writes, "As one of the initial efforts to moral theology written from an explicitly Pentecostal Perspective […] Pentecostal ethics is less about the dos and don'ts of prior generations and more about imitating their Spirit-led and improvisational way of life".[148] Given Yong's explicit pentecostalism, his perspective is noteworthy and generous. Without the understanding and affinity with pentecostalism which Yong clearly has, it should not be surprising that an alternative interpretation of pentecostal ethics could reasonably propose that it is chaotic and disparate. Moreover, given pentecostalism's capacity to be influenced theologically (for better or for worse), perhaps there is something within its spirituality that could provide the key to better understanding pentecostal ethics.

From a methodological perspective, having rejected the general importation of foreign methodologies to pentecostalism, Castelo identifies virtue ethics as the most promising, conceiving the telos of Christian ethics as follows: "The goal of the Christian life becomes ever clearer: greater conformity and likeness to the triune God".[149] This transformational emphasis and his affinity for virtue ethics makes him a particularly interesting candidate for consideration, given that pentecostal ethics boasts a historiography inclusive of personal transformation and holiness. He asks rhetorically whether there is "a model available that can move 'from below to above,' […] so that human flourishing is somehow related to participating and cultivating the imago Dei?"[150] His proposition is clear: pentecostal ethics can be understood, in part, in light of the virtue tradition, particularly given the importance he (as well as the virtue tradition) places on

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[148] "The call here for an epicletic community—one shaped by a yearning after and expectation of the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit—is motivated by the realization that revivalist movements need to find ways to nurture day-to-day life in the Spirit." Amos Yong, "Ethics," *Religious Studies Review* 39, no. 2 (2013): 91.

[149] Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics*, 32.

[150] Ibid., 58.

the integrated whole person.[151] Yet his assessment of ethical method is not isolated nor comprehensive, as Christian thinkers "have gone on to employ the virtues alongside other categories such as 'narratives', traditions, and practices".[152] The candidate whom Castelo highlights as exemplifying this intersection is theological ethicist Stanley Hauerwas, citing Hauerwas's personal support of his work.[153]

While Castelo's context is American, his account of the history and emphasis on theological trends reminds us that ethics is intrinsically important to pentecostals, evidenced by their moral sensitivities and affinity with holy living. He, like Wariboko, prioritises methodological considerations rather than moral content, arguing that pentecostalism has lost its way in moral discourse; and he elicits the Wesleyan contribution to holiness and personal transformation present in early pentecostal churches. He begins to formalise, albeit a limited, moral theology for Pentecostals, including references to virtues and practices congruent with pentecostalism's historic tradition, such as "abiding" and "waiting".[154] These are substantially explored in only the final chapter of his work, integrating the community and narrative aspects that cohere

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[151] "Through the Pentecostal lens, life is lived continually *coram Deo* (before God) for all to see. For this reason, the integration of mind, heart, and body is deeply valued, and of all the constructs available to make sense of this integration and performance, the notion of spirituality is especially fitting." Ibid., 22.

[152] Ibid., 62. This statement followed an extended discussion of Aristotelian virtue ethics. It is connections such as these that indicate he has been influenced by Hauerwas's scholarship and perhaps by MacIntyre's.

[153] "The one who has been most available and supportive of me is Stanley Hauerwas. His influence is quite detectable throughout this work." Ibid., ix.

[154] "Abiding and waiting, then, if they are to be practice-orientations that guide and shape Pentecostals in their identity as God-fearers and God-lovers, are category headings that can include specific practices that can only be fruitful as 'means of grace' when they are undertaken collectively. If individually pursued, these activities would become something altogether different, leading their practitioners to experience any number of problematic and degenerative corruptions, including possibly a solipsistic spirituality, frustration, despair, and so on." Ibid., 30. Green expands this idea in his analysis and suggests that "More specifically [Castelo] makes a plea for patience, a virtue he believes Pentecostals have not understood or embodied well, except perhaps in the context of the altar service where they have discerned the need for and benefits of abiding and waiting". Chris E. W. Green, review of *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics*, by Daniel Castelo, *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 35, no. 1 (2013): 108. The congruence of pentecostal worldview and practice is explored more generally in Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, xx.

with his arguments and some of Stanley Hauerwas's positions.[155] Again, likely due to Hauerwas's influence over his work, Castelo also rejects the idea that Christian ethics always needs to be an event "in the moment" with an action-based approach that always tends to eclipse the critical communal elements of ethics inclusive of virtues and narratives.[156]

Castelo's contributions to pentecostal ethics are twofold: firstly, while the pentecostal history books might paint a disparate picture of ethical priorities, their spirituality might demonstrate an alternative vantage point by which to consider pentecostal moral sensibilities rather than to attempt to theologise the sociocultural influences that impacted pentecostalism. Secondly, of all the contemporary moral traditions that exist, virtue ethics resonates with both the pentecostal moral historiography and contemporary pentecostal practices, indicating that existing frameworks might be employed in the task to articulate an authentic pentecostal ethic.

3.2.7 Summary of Scholarly Contributions to Pentecostal Ethics

Firstly, pentecostal ethics, from an academic perspective, is not easily categorised into existing Christian ethics taxonomy. Secondly, while some of the individual scholars may well have an approach they are employing as individuals, these methodologies are not canonised across the movement, and though there might be similar leanings there appears to be no common authority. So, to summarise these first two challenges, categorisation of methodology remains difficult, both external as well as internal to the movement. A third challenge emerges whereby not only are the approaches

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[155] "Within the horizons of abiding and waiting, the text moved to consider the affections and virtues as viable ethical models within Christian moral reflection. The case was made that within the form of Pentecostal being-in-the-world, the gestures of from above to below and from below to above require some kind of conceptual recognition. Affections are especially amenable to a characterization and formation that are said to take place from above, for Pentecostals have a penchant to emphasize the doxological encounter with the Holy Trinity and all of the changes that can come about from such an event." Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics*, 130.

[156] "Although generalizations are always difficult, Christian ethics often entertains the question 'What should we do?' more so than 'what kind of people are we trying to become? With the focus on right action, a latent ambiguity surrounding the 'we' in question is repeatedly sustained." Ibid., 23.

individualised, but the ethical issues addressed are also selected from the academic's own repertoire. Therefore, it becomes difficult to suggest what ethical issues may be important to pentecostals, given the particularity of each scholar's scope. A final challenge, which may also be in some sense a compliment, is that both the pentecostal philosophers and ethicists considered in this analysis, with the possible exception of Paul Alexander, have enunciated their positions in the frame of ideals and vision rather than pragmatics. And ethics often prioritises practical direction to achieve a pre-established ideal or vision. This bias, however, could be indicative again that pentecostalism, in remaining true to itself, cannot be reconstituted into a foreign framework that bears no significance or clout in the movement.

Notwithstanding these challenges, the hermeneutic of generosity has revealed some important contributions worth considering in this exploration of pentecostal ethics. Smith describes the innate worldview that he argues is shared amongst those who identify as pentecostals. He suggests that this framework can account for an apparent incoherence in pentecostal approaches to ethics, or a lack of systematisation, while providing a common vantage point and consistent way of perceiving the world. Similarly, Wariboko suggests that a "vantage point" rather than a system is a more appropriate way to engage pentecostal ethics, which he identifies as "the pentecostal principle"—creativity and emergence. This emergent creativity makes room for eclectic approaches to issues of ethics and social concern. Dempster demonstrates that it is possible to uphold the Bible as a primary guiding ethical authority without doing so in a fundamentalist way. In one sense he unites the evangelical's prioritisation of the Bible in ethics without alienating those who do not hold a fundamentalist view of the Scriptures. He also highlights a view of the church as an agent of social engagement and provides a thoroughly biblical rationale for this position.

Paul Alexander, on the other hand, recognises not the Bible (although he does not exclude it), but pentecostal history and tradition, as a guiding authority on matters of ethics. For him, tradition acts as an authority to establish pentecostal social priorities and an instrument of critique that holds pentecostalism to account. In particular he recognises a soft sectarianism that was strong enough, initially, to reject cultural pressure, but eventually caved into the status quo on various social issues. Augustine also explores a pentecostal ecclesiology but emphasises the church as an alternate reality parallel to the

world.[157] She also clearly leans more on the side of the holiness tradition, rather than the evangelical roots, evidenced by her focus on personal transformation as a catalyst for social transformation. Finally, Castelo takes a similar approach to Smith and Wariboko and seeks to explore the uniqueness of pentecostalism, its spirituality, and what it might bring to ethics discourse; and he argues in favour of holiness and virtue as a possible compatible framework for pentecostal ethics.

Given this thesis is primarily concerned with both "critiquing" and "making sense of" pentecostal ethics, a vision rather than a methodology, as alluded to in many of the scholars above, could well be the place to start. Threads of this vision emerged in this chapter, particularly given the prioritisation of a hermeneutic of generosity. Both Paul Alexander and Smith have proposed a criterion through which pentecostal ethics might be articulated. Alexander briefly notes that for an ethical argument to be compelling and persuasive in a pentecostal context the argument must be biblically based, Jesus-centred, Spirit-empowered, and intensely practical.[158] While Alexander's proposal seems to be concerned with efficacy—how a pentecostal might be "persuaded" of an ethic—Smith's fivefold framework establishes a philosophical underpinning "across the various pentecostalisms", which he argues governs pentecostal priorities not limited to ethics. These include: "(1) a radical openness to God; (2) an 'enchanted' theology of creation and culture; (3) a nondualistic affirmation of embodiment and materiality; (4) an affective narrative epistemology; and (5) an eschatological orientation to mission and justice".[159] As Alexander is focused on expediency, and Smith abstraction, the answer for this

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[157] Augustine explores pentecostal ecclesiology from a moral and ethical sense. There are however many approaches and dimensions to pentecostal ecclesiology. For example, Shane Clifton's historical ecclesiology of the ACC and Miroslav Volf's theological ecclesiology. Clifton, *Pentecostal Churches in Transition;* Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1998).

[158] P. Alexander, "Christ at the Checkpoint," 63–64. This probably makes sense of why Pentecostals do not jump into a social issue from an activist perspective without being first convinced of its biblical basis, or relevance, even if there is a clear injustice taking place. Alexander describes this as the development of a biblical and Christo-centric "injustice narrative". He goes on to say that "[m]any Pentecostals I know can tolerate the greatest of injustices if they think it's okay with God". Ibid., 65.

[159] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 32–33.

particular thesis, what may constitute a "vision for pentecostal ethics", lies somewhere in the middle. Establishing the common characteristics that arise from the ecclesial literature and academic literature assists in articulating such a vision.

3.3 Emerging Characteristics in Pentecostal Ethics

The remainder of this chapter explores some of the thematic emphases that have emerged in the literature that could constitute an approach to pentecostal ethics. Beginning with the prominence of Scripture, this is followed with a summary of the holiness orientation, much of which arises from ideals that are related to their understanding of biblically grounded moral imperatives. The premium pentecostals place on being a holy or "consecrated" community creates a basis for the third characteristic: a discussion of an emerging ecclesiology. The fourth trend, acknowledged more so in the broader pentecostal literature than the ethics literature, is an affinity and comfortableness with a narrative spirituality (or theology). This arguably gives rise to the fifth characteristic: an eclectic theological method, given the capacity for narrative theology to be expansive, sporadic, and individualistic.

3.3.1 Scriptural Authority: A Bible-Based Ethic

The first characteristic that emerges in pentecostal ethics is the appeal to, and authority placed in, the biblical text. This characteristic is hardly subtle, particularly given the ACC's explicit reference to Scripture, "given by inspiration of God, and [which] is infallible, inerrantly revealing the will of God [...] and is absolutely supreme and sufficient in authority in all matters of faith and conduct. The Bible [...] is, in reality, the complete revelation and very Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit".[160] Given the primacy of the Scriptures, it is also not surprising that biblical references are weaved throughout the ACC ethics documentation to substantiate or support their ethical positions.

The confidence placed in the Bible in this regard is not surprising, given the history of the broader pentecostal movement, where commentators have noted that biblical exposition has formed a central basis of theological reflection on all matters of faith, practice, ministry strategy, leadership, and theology. Because the Bible supplies "the

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[160] Australian Christian Churches, "United Constitution," 5.

written rules" on ethical conduct, very little supplementary writing was produced and, as explained above, experience played a critical role in pentecostal self-understanding, further minimising the need for serious reflection. According to Stephen Parker, the resistance to supplementary writing was characteristic of the movement in its earliest days, when very little was written on anything.[161]

In the United States, however, many pentecostal church groups were coalescing under the banner of "General Council" and despite the clergy's reluctance "to inaugurate a new 'sect' or 'denomination'", in 1914 a document called the "Preamble and Resolution of Constitution" was adopted which formally established a new denomination: the General Council of the Assemblies of God (AG).[162] This initial step toward formal governance opened the door for further discussions on theological matters where the Bible could be debated. As pentecostal historian Vinson Synan describes, a committee of the AG was established in 1916 to deal with critical theological disputes of the time and a "Statement of Fundamental Truths" was developed, despite the desire by the "young denomination […] to never adopt a formal creed".[163]

Whether this historical context shaped pentecostal ethics for better or for worse, it is impossible to understand pentecostal ethics without an appreciation of the importance that Scripture played in shaping the earliest communities in matters of faith *and* practice. Moreover, with respect to "moral discernment" amongst pentecostals, without committing to a particular hermeneutical strategy, Robeck writes that "regardless of what other sources of authority may offer in the moral decision-making process, the

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[161] Stephen E. Parker, *Led by the Spirit: Toward a Practical Theology of Pentecostal Discernment and Decision Making* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 27. The strong oral tradition and lack of systematic theologising has left pentecostals in a situation where they do not have sufficient documentation or treatises to necessarily understand their own moralising.

[162] Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 154–55.

[163] Ibid., 159–60. Over time the denomination's General Council continued to discuss constitutional and theological matters, particularly in response to, as Joshua Ziefle writes, "growth, development, and the need for order in the midst of continuing changes as well as the ever-present danger of theological outliers". Joshua R. Ziefle, *David du Plessis and the Assemblies of God: The Struggle for the Soul of a Movement* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2012), 59–60. See also Mario G. Hoover, *Origin and Structural Development of the Assemblies of God* (Springfield, MO: Southwest Missouri State College, 1968), 182.

final word on the subject belongs solely to scripture".[164]

While it is easy to locate challenges associated with an overtly biblical and absolutist approach to morality, rather than being viewed as "fickle" and simplistic, the use of the Bible in pentecostalism could be conceived as a stabilising force, given its other more creative and spontaneous characteristics. Moreover, though the early ACC material can utilise Scripture in an absolutist fashion commensurate with the evangelical historiography, this style is less apparent in the later documents. Furthermore, pentecostal ethics scholarship has demonstrated how Scripture can carry authority in moral matters without defaulting to absolutism. Dempster, for example, has taken great care to craft his arguments in a thoroughly biblical way while avoiding the pitfalls that can come with some fundamentalist approaches.

The Bible in pentecostal ethics, therefore, is not necessarily a "one-stop-shop" for moral pronouncements, but an initial destination and pre-eminent authority that must be considered. For example, it is possible to have a "high view" of Scripture but allow that view to travel to a variety of destinations. Hollenweger, for instance, "is conservative with regard to the centrality of the Bible, but radical with regard to its interpreters and interpretations".[165] Paul Alexander's summary is on point, that any persuasive ethic in pentecostal circles should necessarily be biblically based.[166] Finally, it is also important to recognise that pentecostalism is not alone in its prioritisation of the Bible in ethics. Indeed, one would be hard pressed to find a Christian denomination that does not consider the Bible to have a central role in the understanding of ethical living, particularly Protestant Christianity. As Wariboko correctly notes, though pentecostalism is more than just Protestantism, it is still Protestant and therefore, necessarily biblical![167]

3.3.2 Holiness Orientation: A Character-Focused Ethic

The second characteristic that explicitly emerges in the literature, particularly the ACC documentation, is an orientation towards "holiness" or "personal moral virtue". This

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[164] Robeck Jr., "Word, Spirit, and Discernment," 139.

[165] Price, *Theology Out of Place*, 63.

[166] See footnote 156 above in this thesis chapter.

[167] Wariboko, *Pentecostal Principle*, 17.

proclivity is not just reflected in the minister's code of conduct, but it is also in the subject matter of the ethical positions the ACC have chosen to address. Moral issues, such as gambling and pornography, and sexual ethics, as well as the lifestyle expectations of church pastors and leaders indicate that pentecostals place a premium on individual moral behaviour. Like the scriptural emphasis described above, the historiographical connections between the holiness movement and early pentecostalism provide at least some explanation as to why this emphasis exists. Given that many of the early pentecostals were also Methodists, the themes noted above are consistent with the subject matter on which the early pentecostals preached and published. This holiness orientation appears to exist on two levels: personal and community consecration.

Regarding issues of personal holiness, both Warrington and Anderson have noted that "homosexuality, alcohol abuse, pornography and abortion have received greater attention and condemnation than others".[168] Historically, pentecostals have also moralised over cosmetics, jewellery, and women's attire in church, alcohol, sexual misconduct, sexual abstinence, and tobacco.[169] Congruent with their prioritisation of Scripture, Anderson also observes that moral positions have been derived from their reading of the Bible as an "ethical rule-book".[170] This moral textualism has consequently sustained a relationship between the importance of Scripture and the quest for holy living.[171] Demonstrably, pentecostals can hold some uncompromising positions regarding moral issues, attracting the criticism that pentecostals can be legalistic. The presence of conviction does not mean, however, that this legalism is static. By the 1990s their

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[168] Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 226. In some contexts, Pentecostals have been encouraged to address these issues politically and publically. See P. Alexander, *Peace to War*, 308–9.

[169] Anderson, *Ends of the Earth*, 125.

[170] Ibid.

[171] It appears that within the pentecostal movement one may intuitively possess "good" morals manifesting in personal holiness, despite a lack of explicit and robust systematic moral reflection. Land describes this as being a unique reorientation of pentecostal priorities in the wake of the evolving holiness emphasis and the emerging evangelical influence of historical-critical method and conservative fundamentalism. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 179. Castelo, from a Methodist vantage point, argues that this kind of focus is a distortion that was created by a misappropriation of the holiness doctrine. Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics*, 87. Furthermore, James Smith contends that this distortion is also philosophical and a form of evangelical neo-gnostic anthropology. Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 61.

understanding of personal holiness had moved away from the focus on tobacco, alcohol, gambling, etc., and could then be characterised by attendance at Christian events, financial giving, and sexual abstinence outside of marriage.[172] While the "overall" emphasis on personal moral virtue was typical of pentecostalism's early days, the foundations for such standards were either transient, and therefore subject to change, or the pentecostal environments themselves were decentralised, resulting in diverse and contextual understandings of holiness.[173]

The substantive evolution to pentecostal holiness has not just been restricted to personal and private acts of consecration. Paul Alexander, by emphasising the historical commitment to pacifism in pentecostal churches, has demonstrated that the early communities were marked not just by individual morality, but by corporate positions taken on social issues. The community embodiment of these moralities is what consecrated the pentecostals. This communal embodiment was one element (of many) that contributed to their social agenda, and as Anderson and Estrelda Alexander have also noted, pentecostal support of issues such as racial and gender equality seemed to set them apart from much of the mainstream. Similarly, Andrew Hamilton and Kenneth Archer, in bringing their two traditions together, Anabaptist/Pietist and pentecostal, respectively, develop the holiness ideals of community consecration into an analysis of ecclesiology as an "alternative society".[174] A helpful summary of pentecostal holiness and the connection to their ecclesial embodiment is also provided by Castelo:

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[172] Wan, "Bridging the Gap," 156.

[173] What is interesting is that these lists of moral issues of concern have been fluid over time and that one might have difficulty applying the above list in modern pentecostal churches that use multimedia presentations and sophisticated audio-visual technology and whose members have no problem using cosmetics and wearing designer outfits to enhance their public image. Historian Edith Blumhofer describes how informal organisation was "characteristic" of early pentecostalism, noting that "the vast majority of Pentecostals were not directly tied to any organisation" and most "had no organizational loyalties beyond their ties to a local assembly". Edith L. Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God: A Chapter in the Story of American Pentecostalism*, vol. 1, *To 1941* (Springfield, MO: Gospel, 1989), 174, 99.

[174] Archer and Hamilton, "Scandalous Partners in Protest," 321.

The holiness that marks Pentecostal fellowship can never be reified or codified, for doing so would compromise a fruitful and innovative (that is, a Spirit-empowered and Spirit-led) future. When early Pentecostals practiced foot washing, advocated pacifism, recognized women as partners in ministry and held services of diverse racial background, they did so not on the basis of maintaining a level of relevance by their observance of the status quo; quite the contrary their apparent irrelevance to the conventions of their day was the bedrock of their alarming relevance, that feature that made them eccentric in a holy kind of way.[175]

Despite the historical evolution of holiness particularities, what has remained consistent is the pentecostal quest for consecration. While pentecostal holiness appears flexible—some might say that it lacks consistency or submits to cultural expediency—one could recognise that the critical moral element for pentecostals is to ensure an enduring commitment to live differently, and that "being holy" is more about being "set apart" rather than fulfilling a list of timeless moral injunctions. This consecration prepares the way for the third characteristic that arises from the pentecostal literature: pentecostalism's separatist ecclesiology, or, as Castelo describes, pentecostalism's internal "eccentricity".[176]

3.3.3 Separatist Ecclesiology: A Church-Orientated Ethic

Clearly theoretical ethics and systematic theology have not been the primary way by which pentecostals have chosen to make their morality visible. The intense drive to establish holy communities that go about doing "the Lord's work" without too much public scrutiny can beg questions such as "What is the pentecostal theological position on moral issue x?" The lack of visibility on these matters is likely twofold. Firstly, practitioners rather than theorists have always been on the ministry frontline; clergy are engaging their communities by helping those in need, or in pulpits preaching sermons to their congregations on the practical elements of life.[177] Secondly, given Dempster's work on

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[175] Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics*, 104.

[176] Ibid.

[177] Anderson, *Ends of the Earth*, 127–128, 139.

the ministry of the church and Augustine's notion of social transformation, the church, in order for its identity to remain authentic and its work pure, must be governed by its own rationality and therefore demands independence and separateness from that which could jeopardise it.

This ecclesial disposition has an ethical implication: that the moral practice of the church as a distinct entity from the world engaging on its own terms is critical for understanding pentecostal ethics. This distinction resonates with Paul Alexander's insistence that for an ethic to be pentecostal, it needs to be practical. He describes the majority of early twentieth-century pentecostal churches and expressions as "peace churches that encouraged conscientious objection".[178] He also suggests that the AG's pacifist position set them apart from many other American Christians.[179] These examples indicate that early pentecostals were living out their ethics despite the culture, not because of it. This is not to say that tensions were not produced by these decisions. For example, Warrington notes that, in some of these controversial ethical matters, churches opted to remain neutral, believing that the church's evangelistic witness would be more effective if they avoided divisiveness.[180] While Alexander might disagree with this strategy of silence, and insist that silence on this matter compromised the pentecostal communal moral identity, the AG retained the hallmark of separatism by remaining aloof to partisan and political matters. This distancing indicates that evangelism and remaining clearly distinct from the world were two principles operating simultaneously.

While retaining political silence to maximise evangelism suggests evangelism to be a higher priority than political engagement for pentecostals, Warrington further argues that traditional strengths of the movement, such as the "oral denunciation of injustice and proclamation of ethical morality",[181] were rejected for fear of too much worldly engagement. He suggests this approach remains legitimate today, because it is historically consistent not just with the early pentecostals' apolitical position but also with that of

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[178] P. Alexander, *Christ at the Checkpoint*, vii. See also Jay Beaman, who notes that Pentecostals found themselves amongst the objectors to World War 1. Beaman, "Extent of Early Pentecostal Pacifism," 3.

[179] P. Alexander, *Peace to War*.

[180] Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 229.

[181] Ibid.

churches in the apostolic period: he notes that Paul's primary goal was developing "Christians in society, not to Christianize society". Despite this, Warrington suggests that "[Paul] anticipated that transformation of society may have resulted from the former".[182] It is therefore entirely consistent and appropriate for pentecostals to order activity toward evangelisation given that their ethics is derivative of the individual's transformation.

The synthesis of individual and communal transformation with ecclesial separatism is best articulated in the work of Daniela Augustine, a great deal of which is connecting personal transformation on the one hand, with the high calling of the church on the other, to live out a distinct set of ethics. Take, for example, her rejection of capitalism and Marxism in favour of an ecclesial economic ethic of hospitality. While proposing an ecclesiocentric pathway is characteristic of her work, it remains sketchy in the ACC statements. For example, calls for Christians to lobby the government toward legislating a particular moral framework can hardly be described as apolitical and separatist, as described by Warrington and Augustine, respectively. Overall, the abandoning of ecclesial priorities in favour of secular or pragmatic positions can be observed in both Alexander's description of the AG's transition away from pacifism by giving into political and social pressures, and the overt suggestions in the ACC material that political influence be pursued. It is possible however that the ACC is in the middle of a pendulum swing, given that the more contemporary statements indicate an ecclesial trajectory change towards a type of soft sectarianism, advocating for a separation of the churches' activities without isolating them. Their recent positions suggest that the churches' unique mandate be prioritised, rather than used to influence a secular position or extend a partisan agenda. This ecclesial refocus could indicate that the ACC are retrieving theological characteristics commensurate with pentecostalisms holiness roots, whether intentionally or not.

It could therefore be argued that a more authentic pentecostal ethic begins with personal transformation that integrates into an ecclesial morality, rather than an overt public one, despite the reality that a desired and necessary effect is public transformation. Augustine's work on social transformation clearly supports this position, given that her

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[182] Ibid., 240.

ethic of hospitality arises from within a transformed community. This is exactly the type of "public" approach to ethics that Dempster has described and that was noted earlier—that the church sets up parallel systems of justice on its own terms and not pursue the takeover of pre-established ones. In other words, early pentecostals lived out their morality as the pentecostal church, rather than as individuals or as public activists. Whether these initiatives have had any influence outside the pentecostal movement is a separate discussion, and potentially irrelevant, given that all indications point to an ecclesiocentric pentecostal ethic.

Both pragmatic preferences and ecclesiocentrism suggest that the capacity of pentecostal ethics goes beyond its ability to be theoretical or systematic, and broader than (but not excluding) appeals to Scripture. Allan Anderson's work also attests to this capacity and indicates that historical pentecostal experiences not only set pentecostal communities apart but were instrumental in exemplifying issues of social concern such as pacifism, feminism, and social justice.[183] Clearly these are moral issues worthy of attention, but pentecostals do not seem to be dependent on an overarching political or social ideology in order for them "to know" of their moral significance nor "to embody" them in the church. One of the mechanisms through which this moral landscape emerges and establishes itself is through what Smith suggests: narrative epistemology.

3.3.4 Narrative Spirituality: A Story-Formed Ethic

As described in chapter 1, there are various approaches in which narrative might be incorporated into a discussion of pentecostal theology. These include the oral roots of the pentecostal movement; the narrative spirituality and practices characteristic of pentecostal churches; the narrative approach to exegesis espoused by Walter

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[183] For example, in Australia, Pentecostalism was founded by working-class, single female Sarah Jane Lancaster. Missionaries such as Minnie Abrams—who also influenced prominent Indian missionary, Pandita Ramabai—were significant players during the formation of early Pentecostalism. Working-class women and poorer communities were at the heart of many of the early revivals, as were more infamous characters such as Aimee Semple Macpherson in the United States. These examples are outlined in Mark Hutchinson, "The Contribution of Women to Pentecostalism," in *Raising Women Leaders*, ed. S. Clifton and Jacqueline Grey (Chester Hill, NSW: Australasian Pentecostal Studies, 2009), 191–220. See also Vondey, *Pentecostalism*, 92–96.

Hollenweger; the narrative epistemology described by James Smith; and the narrative hermeneutics proposed by Kenneth Archer. While these influences are less explicit in the ACC documents, I will establish the significance of narrative for pentecostal ethics at a theological level by briefly attesting to Steven Land's threefold pentecostal methodological model: Spirit, Scripture, community.[184]

Pentecostal academia's acceptance of Land's approach does not make the introduction of an additional theological source (that is, narrative) easy, but it may nevertheless embed comfortably into the "community" arm of the dialogue. That community (inclusive of its stories and the reception of Scripture) provides context and meaning within which Scripture can be interpreted and the Holy Spirit can be received.[185] Although this connection is elusive and requires further demonstration, it is a reminder that the narrative dimensions of pentecostal history, tradition, and practice have a communal function, and moderate how the church receives and interprets various sources of theological authority.

Jeffrey Lamp, for example, argues that Land's proposal elevates Spirit as pre-eminent over the other two sources, on the basis that Spirit gives rise to Scripture. Consequently, community only arises at the behest of Scripture revealed by the Spirit and received in a local congregation.[186] The spirit-centrism guides the way the Bible is used by a church community, rather than supersede or replace the Bible's authority.[187] Given this, one way in which narrative could be appreciated in the ecclesial space is the way in which stories, particularly biblical ones, function through preaching and teaching in churches. As discussed in chapter 1, this practice is alive and well in the pentecostal church and much

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[184] Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 100.

[185] For a more thorough explication of this model, see Archer, "Pentecostal Hermeneutic."

[186] Lamp, "Spirit and the Story," 13.

[187] Regarding theological sources, church tradition (including the historical articulation of the faith), while undoubtedly pneumatologically inspired, is sidelined or eclipsed altogether, which makes the sporadic inclusion of these sources appear ad hoc in the ACC's literature. Lamp argues that the relegated role of church tradition is not informed by rigorous theological method, but by an implicit anti-creedal bias in early Pentecostalism, sometimes exacerbated by prolific theologians such as Amos Yong, who seem to be comfortable minimising church tradition based on its historical tendency to limit the work of the Spirit. Ibid. See Yong, *Spirit, Word, Community*, 273.

of the narrative content of the Bible is leveraged in exactly this way. Price notes how "form criticism in particular, and especially in relation to the New Testament, had revealed the oral origins of much biblical material […] Narrative exegesis belonging to the oral culture was, in other words, intrinsic to the bible".[188] Notwithstanding accusations of anti-intellectualism occasionally levied at pentecostals, this brief analysis demonstrates that biblical scholarship and narrative approaches to the Bible need not be mutually adversarial, and narrative approaches to the Bible may even carry academic merit.

Scott Ellington also elaborates on the public reading of Scripture and describes that, "As we tell the biblical stories and make them our own, we both expose them to the possibility of negation and create a space for them to be revitalized. So we tell our stories and wait for the Holy Spirit to move".[189] While this proposal might seem carefree and counterintuitive given that I am making the case that narrative approaches are legitimate methodological priorities, the practice falls somewhere between Hollenweger's narrative exegesis and Archer's narrative hermeneutics. Price argues that the former's approach functions as a corrective to theological abstraction "by concretizing and personalizing the process of theologizing, thus making it more accessible for all to participate".[190] Finally, Smith also describes a similar practice straight from the biblical text in his discussion on pentecostal epistemology. Just like Peter and the disciples made sense of their experience in Acts 2 by superimposing a broader narrative, when pentecostals testify, they "enact an identity by writing themselves into the larger story of God's redemption […] providing a framework to make sense of their own struggles and victories".[191]

While a clear systematic strategy for including narrative in the creation of pentecostal realities and meaning is difficult to establish, stylistic, historical, theological, and philosophical rationales are not. The academic literature, particularly the writing of James Smith and Murray Dempster, recognises the power of narrative, but in contrast the

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[188] Price, *Theology Out of Place*, 49.

[189] Scott A. Ellington, "Locating Pentecostals at the Hermeneutical Round Table," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 22 (2013): 225.

[190] Price continues: "The use of narrative also, as he [Hollenweger] himself recognised, created questions rather than providing answers to theological issues, in that the complexities and uncertainties of theological decision making were laid bare for all to see". Price, *Theology Out of Place*, 93.

[191] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 51.

ACC literature is less explicit. Nevertheless, the general ideas are present: stories matter; there is hope for miracles; and meaning is uncovered not just in the biblical text but in the lived experience reminiscent of ancient narratives found in the Scriptures.[192] The breadth of narrative spirituality includes, according to James Smith, an epistemology that engages with the emotions. While some might dismiss this vantage point, David Velleman writes: "the way narratives work is affective. A narrative makes sense of a life, a series of events, or an experience by a 'logic' that is not deductive but affective".[193] In particular, Smith is exploring the way stories about our own lives function in an epistemic way. In a sense, narrative theology can manifest in an intensely individual way as well as carry community authority as described above.

This dialogue demonstrates a lively discussion regarding pentecostalism's cognisant harbouring of narrative theology, but given the pragmatic orientation of ethics, I briefly return to the discussion of narrative spirituality. Theologian and minister Larry Sterling notes that the unique internalities of pentecostalism make it very difficult to align with other spiritualities.[194] In particular, its characteristic ecstatic experiences require a brief comment,[195] especially because these experiences constitute another example of what James Smith calls "narrative knowledge".[196] In an endorsement of personal experience and significance of testimony, Martin Mittelstadt labels this approach as "theology as autobiography".[197] Consequently pentecostals treat spiritual and religious experience, including its narrative elements, with both great sincerity and epistemological

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[192] See P. Alexander's discussion on the power of testimony: "What is your story? Your story matters, it matters deeply, and people are motivated by personal testimonies of transformation and hope".
P. Alexander, "Christ at the Checkpoint," 69.

[193] J. David Velleman, "Narrative Explanation," *Philosophical Review* 112, no. 1 (2003): 6. Quoted in Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 65.

[194] Sterling, "Pentecostal Ethic."

[195] Perry explains that "Because Pentecostals are usually people who give serious credence to their spiritual experiences, they find little use for theology that does not recognize or engage with their experience". David Perry, "Pentecostal Spirit Baptism: An Analysis of Meaning and Function" (PhD thesis, Australian Catholic University, 2014), 28.

[196] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 64.

[197] Mittelstadt, "My Life as a Menno-costal," 317.

authority, and this elevation exists on both the ecclesial and individual level.[198] As Hollenweger reminds us, "Pentecostal roots lie in the soil of oral, narrative, bodily, and therefore biographical theology".[199]

Whereas various trends, such as evangelical sensibilities, have wavered in popularity, Scott Ellington suggests that the pentecostal love of storytelling has remained consistent.[200] Moreover, where Poirier perceives narrative to weaken any attempt to stabilise theological discourse, both Paul Alexander's and Smith's writing, as ethicists, indicate that narrative plays an instrumental role in pentecostal self-understanding. Narrative, therefore, is required in any developing framework for pentecostal ethics. Indeed, Hollenweger suggests that "the alternative to a written liturgy is not chaos but a flexible oral tradition, which allows for variations within the framework of the whole liturgical structure, similar to the possibilities in a jam session of jazz musicians—another black heritage".[201] Moreover, narrative, when understood to function at both the community and individual levels, can call a community to holy living and social

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[198] Frank Macchia, former President of SPS (2000), defends the Pentecostal experience as a central and defining element of Pentecostalism and explores the relationship between doctrine and experience. Frank D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 54–55. See also Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 27; Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Chichester, UK: Wiley, 2011), 148. Contrarily Smith also notes that "in epistemology, the Pentecostal emphasis on experience and affectivity would be the ground for a critique of dominant rationalisms (particularly in evangelical philosophical and theological circles)" and therefore supplies a reasonable criticism of the assumption that experience cannot constitute a legitimate epistemological frame. Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 13. This may be partially due to Pentecostal's Wesleyan heritage, which taught that there are four constitutive theological sources for doctrinal formation: Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. Donald G. Bloesch, *A Theology of Word and Spirit: Authority and Method in Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 208. Wesley's reason for including experience in his formula was grounded in his understanding of epistemology. As described by Yrigoyen: "[H]e understood experience (Religious experience as well as sense experience) as a critical ground of human knowledge", and by extension, legitimate theological knowledge (doctrine). Charles Yrigoyen Jr., ed., *T&T Clark Companion to Methodism* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2014), 70.

[199] Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 399.

[200] Ellington, "Locating Pentecostals," 225.

[201] Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 271.

transformation simultaneously. Furthermore, rather than confusing and relativising, narrative could sustain an openness to new knowledge and agility in response to changing environments that may well strengthen a pentecostal approach to ethics.

This context provides a helpful backdrop to the final thematic emphasis which has emerged in this study of pentecostal ethics: an eclectic approach to methodology. The narrative characteristics described above may go a long way to illuminating why pentecostal ethical methodology, evidenced in the ACC material, appears to be ad hoc and inconsistent. If narrative theology is to be credited for some of this unpredictability, it can function as an explanation without having to excuse why it might appear confusing. And if there is a better explanation to be explored, then there may well be more rationality behind it than initially suspected. The connection between narrative and a creative approach to ethics may well be that narrative allows for a universal theology without "epistemological brain-washing and cultural imperialism".[202] In other words, a way of sustaining intercultural realities without truncating them to uniformity.

3.3.5 Eclectic Methodology: A Creative-Pragmatic Ethic

The strongest methodological theme in the ACC literature, and in subsequent criticism of the literature in chapter 2, is that pentecostal ethics lacks a consistent methodology and comes across as chaotic and ad hoc. Furthermore, pentecostal ethical positions are determined, without attending to apparent contradictions in their reasoning or conclusions. From a historical perspective, it is easy to rationalise why this might be so. Indeed, many scholars have made the case that the broader issue is the lack of theological reflection within pentecostal institutions. Catholicism, by contrast, boasts a rich theological heritage going back two thousand years, while pentecostalism, still only in its first century, has lacked the time it takes to develop and inculcate its own tradition to the same extent.

Without a systematic approach understood as uniquely pentecostal, pentecostals are forced to engage on the terms set by other ethical traditions or to exercise their own moral sensibilities in ways they deem appropriate. This lack of instantiated tradition is

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[202] Ibid.

often partnered with a repudiation of the idea that pentecostals can be thinkers at all.[203] Furthermore, much of their early constituency—the lower classes, typified by one of its pioneers, William J. Seymour, a poor, one-eyed black man—were generally not educated or positioned in a way that assisted the establishment of a systematic theological tradition.[204] In essence, they lacked the social privilege, prominence, and longevity afforded Catholicism and Protestantism. Indeed, "the movement did not begin in a lecture hall, royal court, or ecclesial meeting but rather in the context of revival and worship". [205]

The revivalist milieu also contributed toward the rapid numerical expansion, particularly in the global south, and has exacerbated the problem by outpacing any theological maturation that may have otherwise occurred. Given the preference for practical ministry activities, it may seem, at face value, that the onus is on the pentecostal community to upskill, and to educate its leaders in the disciplines required, especially if there is an expectation that pentecostals are to engage ecumenically and potentially even globally.[206] This proposal however assumes that such endeavours are important to pentecostals or even belong in a pentecostal philosophical framework. Vondey explains that "the characterization of Pentecostalism as an ambiguous social movement overlaps

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[203] This is what James Smith recalls from his encounter with a distinguished Canadian theologian at the 1994 meeting of the Canadian Theological Society. Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, xii. Frank Macchia also suggests that systematic theological reflection has never been a priority in the Pentecostal movement, and time and resources have therefore not been given to this endeavour. Frank D. Macchia, "The Struggle for Global Witness: Shifting Paradigms in Pentecostal Theology," in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*, ed. Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, and Douglas Petersen (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011), 8. See also Vondey, Pentecostalism, 133–140.

[204] Stanley Grenz, in his systematic theology, defines ethics as the intersection between Christian theology and Christian practice. He argues that the goal of theological reflection is not systematics per se but application. "Theological commitment must be applied to life—to the theologian's own Christian walk and to the life of the church—in order that faith can issue forth in discipleship." Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 25. In making this case, Grenz suggests that one cannot have Christian theological commitment without attendant Christian practice. Using Grenz's proposal as a model, any Christian educational context that does not make these connections is problematic.

[205] Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics*, 22.

[206] This refers to the "small p" Pentecostals, as described above.

[the] perspective of inherent contradictions. Ambiguity identifies a certain lack of clarity, both for Pentecostalism itself and its observers, without immediately juxtaposing certain positions or excluding others", indicating that, at least for now, pentecostals are comfortable living in the "tension" and "eclecticism".[207]

From what has been noted in the existing pentecostal literature, Smith has proposed a philosophical framework, and Augustine's and Wariboko's work indicates that a considered pentecostal approach to ethics is possible and beneficial. While the ACC's literature is ambiguous in its approaches to ethics, the academic literature supports the assumption that pentecostal's authenticity and distinctiveness be maintained by engaging on their own terms, rather than on terms set by an alternate authority. Given that eclectic methodology characterises pentecostal ethics, it is worth considering "eclecticism" a marker or distinction, as opposed to the prior assumption that it is problematic. This assumption is theologically and philosophically presumptuous, superimposing the expectations of pre-established ethics methodologies onto pentecostalism.

This characteristic is particularly evident in the ACC's ecclesial-orientated engagement, where their arguments employ a range of ethics approaches, from deontological and teleological, to virtue and conscience. The evaluation of pentecostal scholars described in this chapter has also revealed an eclectic mix of methods, ranging from biblical to philosophical blueprints. James Smith's contributions to a pentecostal philosophical blueprint, as ways of describing how pentecostalism "works", includes a "radical openness to God" and a "narrative epistemology".[208] Both of these characteristics indicate that pentecostals live with an innate flexibility, in terms of both what they expect and what they know—and, of course, where the Spirit might lead.

Given this internal agility built into their way of seeing the world and the activity of the Spirit, it is probably unreasonable to expect that any pentecostal employ a one-size-fits-all approach to their interaction with the world, both theologically and morally. Along these lines, Wariboko's perspective suggests that pentecostals are open to new

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[207] Vondey, *Pentecostalism*, 109.

[208] Castelo also reflects on Smith's work and suggests that this "worldview" represents "pre-theoretical understandings and intuitions that are closer to confessions of faith than consciously chosen positions". Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics*, 18.

possibilities, and comfortable living in a world of 'plurality'. This openness attracts a pluralistic set of answers, and positions pentecostals to receive the unexpected and creatively respond. A deeper analysis may provide some insight as to whether the response is innate (or intuitive—pentecostals may prefer the term "Spirit-led") and whether the methodology that best suits the response can be retroactively applied. In other terms, it is possible that the answers may be "known" before they are "processed".

Picking up on both the eclectic responses and methodologies, Castelo also uses the term "improvisation"—a positive spin on what some might consider impulsivity. More specifically, he describes the "dynamic of scripturally-unscripted improvisation"[209] manifesting in a diverse set of responses which seldom follow the same rules or reflect any one tradition. These include: "anointing somebody with oil or washing another's feet; providing aid to relief organizations at the same time of a natural disaster or refusing to bear arms in a war-crazed nation-state; or reaching out to the pariahs and untouchables of a given society or seeking those who are spiritually lost in a specific neighbourhood".[210] This improvisation coherently connects with another pentecostal distinctive, their pragmatic orientation, synergising "hearing/believing and embodying the faith quite naturally and intuitively".[211] This intuition manifests with great impact across the breadth of pentecostal practice, not limited to ethics. Driven by pragmatism and innovation, they have appropriated strategies which included "the latest publishing technologies and transportation mediums". [212]

Finally, Dempster's Old Testament biblical ethics is an example of scripturally informed frameworks that are not necessarily didactic, but nevertheless demonstrate that not only is the Bible critical in pentecostal ethics (of any stripe) as argued above, but

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[209] Ibid., 105. Castelo does not elaborate on the apparent contradiction embedded in this phrase, except to suggest that Scripture describes a world in which the Spirit's work breaches the status-quo. The precedent for Spirit-inspired improvisation is therefore established in the Bible. Improvisation, as a characteristic, is also elaborated by Harvey Cox. Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise Of Pentecostal Spirituality And The Reshaping Of Religion In The 21st Century* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1995), 81–122, 143–157.

[210] Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics*, 105.

[211] Ibid., 90.

[212] Ibid.

it can also be applied in a myriad of creative ways. These diverse applications of the text are demonstrable in the ACC material. In contrast, Augustine's work does not just display comfortableness with theology and philosophical ethical argumentation (while retaining a very explicit pentecostal flavour): it demonstrates that pentecostals can and do engage in eclectic compilations of methodologies. In conclusion, an eclectic methodology appears to characterise pentecostal ethics inside and outside the academy. While methodological consistency is expected and demanded in other Christian and secular ethical traditions, it is not so with pentecostalism, at least in the way that the current ethics establishment might presuppose.

3.3.6 Summary of Emerging Characteristics in Pentecostal Ethics

Having analysed the pentecostal literature, including the academic ethics scholarship, the ecclesial documentation, as well as broader theological and historical contributions, five characteristics have emerged that seem to be shared across the breadth of the pentecostal movement. These characteristics can be critiqued robustly from two different vantage points: a hermeneutic of suspicion and a hermeneutic of generosity.

From a "suspicious" vantage point, many of the challenges that emerged in chapters 1 and 2 indicate that pentecostal ethics in its use of Scripture can be simplistic, and the way it describes holiness narratives, legalistic. Furthermore, the "otherworldly" focus and separatist attributes of pentecostal ecclesiology can communicate that pentecostals are unwilling to engage with the world, or in some cases are hostile to it. Similarly, the epistemological use of stories can exacerbate individualism and stifle rigorous theological discussions, as well as render long-established ethical schools redundant. Moreover, an ad hoc invocation of diverse methodologies certainly communicates chaos, and the emphasis on stories can, to some degree, expose pentecostalism to the risk of relativism.

However, giving pentecostal ethics the opportunity to stand on its own two feet, a slightly different picture emerges. Applying a "generous" lens allows for a reinterpretation of these five challenging issues and provides a possible framework for pentecostal ethics. A simplistic approach to Scriptures is only half the story, as pentecostal practitioners and theologians engage the biblical text in a variety of hermeneutical ways, notwithstanding that the prayerful reading of Scripture is encouraged, and many

pentecostals routinely take their personal Bible to church. This simple practice, which Robeck credits to 17th-century Pietism, also should not be passed over too quickly. The presence of pentecostals who read and interpret the Bible "themselves" in church communities functions as an additional check on the use of Scripture at the corporate level. This practice makes space for community discernment, whereby the preacher's sermon can be "tested" against Scripture in the ecclesial context.[213] The common factor is that they highly value the Scriptures and recognise its extensive applicability and transformative efficacy, as well as its divine authority. So, a theme that brings pentecostal ethics together, is, for lack of a better expression, their "high, broad, and deep" view of Scripture—emphasising the authoritative, democratic, and transformative power simultaneously.

Related to Scripture's prioritisation, criticisms can be made against pentecostals for the apparent legalism they espouse. This assumption is primarily supported by their history and their consistent employment of holiness codes, despite these codes having changed in content over time. However, to hold pentecostals exclusively to this criticism negates the reality that there are many denominations that value "holiness codes" or their equivalent. So rather than rejecting pentecostal ethics because they, along with other moral traditions, value holiness and personal transformation, it is possible to recognise this characteristic as a theme rather than a flaw.

Similarly, the fact that pentecostalism seems to favour a separatist approach to ethical engagement is not a controversial position in global Christianity. Indeed, there have been countless criticisms toward churches that have, in their engagement, become too friendly with the secular world—the state, political powers and corrupt institutions—and consequently, even with the best intentions, they have invited corruption and dubious agendas into the ecclesial space.

A recognition of narrative spirituality, theology, and consequently ethics is certainly a mark of pentecostalism, but not exclusively so. Notwithstanding a tremendous amount of work that has been done in the narrative theology space, philosophically speaking, narrative epistemology is not solely the domain of a religious worldview. This begs the question whether an articulated narrative theology might give rise to another

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[213] Robeck Jr., "Word, Spirit, and Discernment," 140.

characteristic by which pentecostal ethics might be comprehended.

The final characteristic that I have raised in this chapter is the eclectic methodology that seems to follow the ACC's modus operandi and that is also apparent in the academic literature. From a critical perspective, there is good reason to identify eclecticism as problematic, and even chaotic, lacking structure, rationality, and systematisation. However, as a strength, I have noted that it could unleash a broader, more creative approach to ethical problems and release the spirit of intuition and innovation that most certainly characterise pentecostal theology and practice. The challenge is determining an effective criterion to measure these innovations. The criterion that I propose will not be any single one of the characteristics described so far, but rather all of them taken together. Each on their own is prone to weakness and even abuse. However, taken together, these characteristics function to keep the others "in check" from excesses or deficiencies, and furthermore, their complex interactions could characterise a pentecostal ethic that is open to the work of the Spirit to respond to new situations, without being so radically open that it collapses into subjectivism or relativism.

3.4 Conclusion: Academic Reflections Enrich and Expand Pentecostal Ethics

Despite a myriad of legitimate problems identified in chapters 1 and 2, not all of which will be possible to resolve in this thesis, there are elements of pentecostal ethics that have emerged upon a further analysis of the pentecostal scholarship. The application of a hermeneutic of generosity to both the academic and ecclesial literature in this chapter has revealed a collection of trends and emphases that are characteristically pentecostal. These characteristics provide a possible framework through which pentecostal ethics might be comprehended and interpreted. They include the value placed on Scripture, a holiness orientation, separatist ecclesiology, narrative spirituality, and an eclectic approach to ethical methodology. This framework substantiates the second claim of this thesis, that there are characteristics that could be used to clarify a possible pentecostal ethic.

Part of this hermeneutic of generosity has included putting aside the criticisms of chapters 1 and 2, and recognising that those criticisms emerged from a traditional theoretical understanding, or unspoken expectations, of how Christian ethics should be structured. Castelo also has a basis for a hermeneutic of generosity with regard to

pentecostal ethics, arguing that "social-scientific and other disciplinary methodologies should not be privileged over theological ones simply because they are assumed to be less subjective and biased by the academic establishment".[214] Chapter 3 has demonstrated that regardless of whether one might personally agree with the particular theology and beliefs proposed by pentecostal ethicists, pentecostal ethics carries a theological rationality. This rationality can be observed in the academic work and can account for some of the ecclesial writing analysed in chapter 2.

Given the existence of the common dimensions that characterise pentecostal ethics, Stanley Hauerwas is a theologian whose work could function to hold these characteristics together in a systematic way. If these characteristics find resonance and intelligibility in Hauerwas's theological work, it could well be possible to sustain a methodologically and theologically coherent approach to pentecostal ethics by demonstrating how these characteristics can coexist and interrelate.

In terms of this thesis, Paul Alexander acknowledges the influence that both John Howard Yoder and Stanley Hauerwas have had on him and his work.[215] Castelo has also credited Hauerwas's support of his work in ethics, citing him as one who "usually knew more about [Castelo] and [his] theological tradition than any other person in a given room of Duke faculty".[216] Likewise, James Smith acknowledges that Stanley Hauerwas's corpus has been "both a launching pad and a foil" for contemporary political theologians in general, but moreover he credits Hauerwas with two additional personal concessions. Hauerwas's work was, firstly, the catalyst for Smith's realisation of the deficiency in his

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[214] Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics*, 13.

[215] P. Alexander, *Pentecostals and Nonviolence*, xviii. At the time of writing this thesis, John Howard Yoder's sexual misconduct was publicised. Nevertheless, his work retains intellectual value for this project, given that, firstly, he writes extensively on the topic of pacifism, and secondly, his writing profoundly influenced Stanley Hauerwas and his corpus of work. It is also worth noting that Yoder himself argued that Pentecostalism was the closest thing we have to the Anabaptist tradition, therefore uniting Pentecostals, Mennonites, Hauerwas, and scholars such as Alexander and Middelstadt. John Howard Yoder, "Marginalia," *Concern for Christian Renewal* 15 (1967): 78. Cited in Mark Nation, *John Howard Yoder: Mennonite Patience, Evangelical Witness, Catholic Convictions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 45–46.

[216] Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics*, ix.

own ecclesiology, and secondly, it specifically "woke him up" to the realisation that "the church has its own cultural center of gravity".[217] In this regard, while Hauerwas is "often accused of having an inadequate doctrine of the Holy Spirit", he writes that pentecostals appear "to know in their bones that a strong distinction between church and world was necessary to sustain the witness of the church to a peace that can come only through the work of the Spirit".[218] Part III of this thesis takes on this challenge—to establish a compatibility between pentecostal ethics and Stanley Hauerwas's ethics—in order to further clarify the pentecostal characteristics, how they interrelate, and the nature of pentecostal ethics more broadly.

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[217] James K. A. Smith, *Awaiting the King: Reforming Public Theologyg* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2017), xii.

[218] P. Alexander, *Pentecostals and Nonviolence*, xiv.

PART III: THE PENTECOSTAL-HAUERWASIAN ALLIANCE

Part I considered challenges with pentecostal ethics, and Part II explored potential rationalities undergirding pentecostal ethics. Part III pursues a dialogue partner to complement and strengthen pentecostal ethics and proposes Stanley Hauerwas as a theological interlocutor. The Pentecostal-Hauerwasian Alliance is argued, firstly, on the basis that both "exist" on the theological margins, and secondly, that Hauerwas's narrative theological ethics resonates with the pentecostal characteristics outlined in Part II. Chapter 4 elaborates the former by introducing Stanley Hauerwas and his agenda and describes his rejection of the "mainstream". Chapter 5 will analyse his replacement—narrative theological ethics—to establish its resonance with pentecostal priorities.

CHAPTER 4

STANLEY HAUERWAS'S REJECTION OF "MAINSTREAM" CHRISTIAN ETHICS

4.1 Introduction: Hauerwas, His Agenda, and the Status Quo

Chapters 1 and 2 have argued that pentecostal ethics presents as methodologically inconsistent and chaotic in its approaches to moral issues. Chapter 3, however, has identified common characteristics that emerge in the ACC material and substantiated these characteristics and priorities, referencing ethics scholarship from the pentecostal academy.

This chapter briefly introduces Stanley Hauerwas and his academic agenda; then it offers a detailed review of Hauerwas's rejection of traditional approaches to ethics, locating him as a theological "outsider". Given that pentecostal ethics does not follow one ethical tradition consistently, and that in some cases, such as Wariboko's work, it rejects formulaic approaches altogether, an academic perspective positing similar dispositions will be helpful. Hauerwas's theological rejection of "mainstream" ethical traditions presents one such perspective that shares resonance with these pentecostal proclivities. Therefore, this chapter will analyse his dissatisfaction with establishment ethics by assessing his opposition to some common approaches to Christian ethics. These include Jesus, Scripture, natural law, divine command, the function of rules, and situation ethics.

This analysis will begin to illuminate his own methodology by challenging the status quo and creating a void in which his own theological ethics will be deployed.

4.1.1 Introducing Stanley Hauerwas

According to *Time Magazine*, Stanley Hauerwas is "America's best theologian".[1] Jeffrey Stout describes Hauerwas as the "most prolific and influential theologian now working in the United States".[2] Nevertheless, his suitability for this thesis is grounded on both general and substantive characteristics, rather than his popular appeal. Regarding his general compatibility, Hauerwas commentator Nicholas Healy notes that there are many stylistic elements of Hauerwas's work that contribute toward his popularity and his communicative effectiveness. For example: Hauerwas is "witty and almost always an interesting or provoking read [and] does not usually write like a typical academic".[3] Stout writes that the flouting of academic rules is bound to draw criticism from "academic border police",[4] a gamble Hauerwas is comfortable taking. Also risking humour, Hauerwas ensures he does not paint a dull picture of God.[5] These idiosyncrasies have been cited by his critics and allies alike, but they go beyond style. The characteristics contribute toward building Hauerwas a brand that seems to place him on the margins of the theological establishment. These characteristics lend themselves to his suitability as a dialogue partner for pentecostalism despite his never belonging to a pentecostal church.

Hauerwas has an eclectic denominational pedigree, and while identifying as a "High-Church Mennonite", he has historically associated with the United Methodist

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[1] *Time Magazine*, September 17, 2001, Vol. 158 No. 11.

http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,1000859,00.html

https://divinity.duke.edu/academics/faculty/stanley-hauerwas.

[2] Jeffrey Stout, *Democracy and Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 139.

[3] "His work is never so measured, careful, or dry that it becomes dull." Nicholas M. Healy, *Hauerwas: A (Very) Critical Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 11.

[4] Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, 156.

[5] Indeed, much of what he says is enhanced by the "accent" (perhaps both the tone and literal Texan accent) in which it is said. William T. Cavanaugh, "Stan the Man: A Thoroughly Biased Account of a Completely Unobjective Person," in Berkman and Cartwright, *Hauerwas Reader*, 17.

Church, and Anglicanism.[6] Healy contends that Hauerwas's "place within the church is also unusual, at least for someone who is so church-oriented. He is a layperson who writes as a churchman, as one who has been and remains an often very engaged member of various congregations and churches".[7] While I will address his transient church memberships later in this chapter, it was during his academic tenure at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, that Hauerwas began to contend with the work of John Howard Yoder seriously, elements of which informed his progressively developing ethical thought.[8] Subsequently, Hauerwas's focus became, as Hays summarises, "Jesus as paradigm for Christian ethics, on the church as an alternative community of discipleship,

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[6] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 6.

[7] Healy, *Hauerwas*, 10. William Cavanaugh's short biography on Hauerwas describes his thought and work as follows: "Not only do Protestant and Catholic influences cross-pollinate in Hauerwas's thought, but also his church affiliations have been many and transient. In New Haven a United Methodist church was his home for two years, followed by a period of no church at all. During his first teaching job, a brief stint at Augustana College in Illinois, he worshiped at a high Lutheran liturgy, but started going to Catholic Mass in a dorm when he moved to Notre Dame. After several years at Sacred Heart parish on the Notre Dame campus, Hauerwas began to take instruction in the Catholic faith, but his wife Ann's objections put an end to thoughts of becoming Catholic. Following a year at St. Augustine's, a largely African American Catholic congregation, Stanley and his son Adam finally ended up at Broadway United Methodist Church in South Bend". Cavanaugh, "Stan the Man", 22.

[8] Since the inception of this thesis, it has come to light that John Howard Yoder has been a perpetrator of sexual abuse. Hauerwas's intolerance of hypocrisy emerged in his particular response: "there only needs to be one such report to establish the violent character of Yoder's behaviour". Stanley Hauerwas, "In Defence of 'Our Respectable Culture': Trying to Make Sense of John Howard Yoder's Sexual Abuse," *ABC*, October 18, 2017, accessed June 17, 2018, http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2017/10/18/4751367.htm. Hauerwas particularly highlights how Yoder's teaching on nonviolence is completely incompatible with the way he led his life and governed relationships with women. Ibid. Reflecting further, Hauerwas admits, "I was absolutely stunned by the Mennonite Quarterly Review on Yoder. I knew about it, but I didn't know the extent of it. Mark Nation has convinced me that I have to write a response in terms of my relationship with John. What he did was just wrong. And he backed it with a stupid theory". Brian Brock and Stanley Hauerwas, *Beginnings: Interrogating Hauerwas*, ed. Brian Brock and Susan F. Parsons (New York: T&T Clark, 2017), 184.

and on nonviolence".[9] Hauerwas writes of the latter, that nonviolence is the "hallmark of the Christian life."[10]

Hauerwas's theological contribution is creative and eclectic, again, making him an appropriate scholar to be employed in a dialogue with pentecostalism. As the hermeneutic of suspicion demonstrated, pentecostal ethics is difficult to systematise. Similarly, Hauerwas fights against expectations to order his theology in such a systematic way. His suitability is amplified by noting his bias against "modern theology" and "distrust of systematics" and its drive to reconfigure "the various *loci* […] by marking one *locus* determinative for all the others"[11]—or, as Herman Paul writes, "the idea that theological reflection amounts to making 'propositions' about 'objects' which can be 'systematized' into 'positions'".[12]

Healy clarifies Hauerwas's concern with systematics as follows:

For Hauerwas the ethicist, […] it seems sometimes as if talking about God gets us into trouble […] for example, he worries that talk about God is all too often talk about how we can say God exists. As a result, it too easily devolves into apologetics, and of an abstract kind, rather than the communal display of truthfulness Hauerwas believes is correct.[13]

Contrasting his work with the contributions of systematicians, Hauerwas writes: "the truth is finally known in the showing",[14] meaning that "the truth is embodied and shown in what we do rather than in what we say we believe".[15] Given this pragmatic orientation,

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[9] Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (London: T&T Clark, 1996), 254.

[10] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, xxiv.

[11] Stanley Hauerwas, *Sanctify Them in the Truth: Holiness Exemplified* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 2.

[12] This is also substantiated by Hauerwas's preference for writing essays over monographs. Herman Paul, "Stanley Hauerwas: Against Secularization in the Church," *Zeitschrift für Dialektische Theologie* 29, no. 2 (2013): 14.

[13] Healy, *Hauerwas*, 103.

[14] Hauerwas, *Sanctify Them*, 43.

[15] Healy, *Hauerwas*, 103.

Hauerwas's problem with systematics may primarily be when it assumes a propositional function at the expense of a practical one. Hauerwas's critique can be sustained simultaneously with my own assessment of his relationship with systematics—that his repudiation of systematics is, at times, overstated.

Along these lines, Healy suggests that Hauerwas is perhaps more systematic than he cares to admit. Given much of Hauerwas's brand (and appeal) is grounded on his claim as an anti-establishment figure, and Healy cautions this claim, I will attempt to clarify this dissonance further. For example, while Hauerwas suggests that "theology's inherently practical character […] defies strong systematization",[16] Healy distinguishes between "principles of organisation" and "overarching doctrine or principle".[17] If by "systematic" we mean the former, then the critique likely stands, but as I will enumerate in further detail when Hauerwas's ecclesiology is analysed in chapter 5, Hauerwas's ecclesiology is not just meticulous but central to the structure of his theological ethics—an "overarching doctrine". Hauerwas's "system", therefore, is dependent on his theology of "the church", which becomes the "determinative *locus*" of the rest of his work.

Nevertheless, he adopts the outsider identity, substantiated by his self-description as a theological nomad and by the strident, rhetorical, and somewhat prophetic tone of his writing.[18] His brand is established through these avenues and although some of his claims might be overstated, his desire to make his location on the theological margins is clear. Therefore, to read Hauerwas's work considering his own self-understanding is an important hermeneutical filter that will be applied moving forward. Before I discuss his more substantial compatibility, I will summarise the key elements of Hauerwas's theological program that will help frame his thinking for the remainder of this chapter.

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[16] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, xvi.

[17] Healy, *Hauerwas*, 18–19.

[18] "Provocative" is also an appropriate descriptor. Brian Brock notes this in the academic context in an interview with Hauerwas: "The question it seems to me that you are forcing your audience of academic ethicists and theologians to consider is whether the practice of the guild might be a little dishonest or at least a pretentious form of tribal self-absorption. What you're clearly doing is challenging settled habits and narratives. It looks like you do this without offering any alternative habits or alternative at all really". Brock and Hauerwas, *Beginnings*, 73.

4.1.2 Stanley Hauerwas's Theological Program

Despite his eclectic theological and ecclesial context, Hauerwas develops distinct contributions. For example, Berkman writes, "[o]ne of Hauerwas's great strengths lies in exposing assumptions at work in contemporary secular and theological ethics which he takes to be incompatible with Christian faith".[19] Samuel Wells summarises Hauerwas's own hermeneutic of suspicion at work: Hauerwas's mission is to identify "weaknesses of approaches to Christian ethics that focused disproportionately on the moment of decision".[20] Similarly, Reno breaks down Hauerwas's ethics vantage point into three C*s*: character, church, and Constantinianism; and he summarises Hauerwas's work in the following way: "Across the heterogeneity of his many essays and books, he is always a theologian of the specifically Christian form of power".[21] On Constantianism, Hauerwas adopts John Howard Yoder's description, "the identification of the church's mission and the meaning of history with the function of the state in organizing sinful society".[22] Wells also clarifies that when Hauerwas invokes this term, he is not doing so on the basis that the church pre-Constantine was "pristine".[23] But in all of its uses throughout the Hauerwas corpus, the term is unilaterally invoked to refer to the various distortions of the church, its political and public identity, and its conflict with the world.[24]

Given that "character" and virtue are foundational to his ethics, he defines character as "the qualification of man's self-agency through his beliefs, intentions, and

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[19] John Berkman, "An Introduction to the Hauerwas Reader," in Berkman and Cartwright, *Hauerwas Reader*, 5.

[20] Samuel Wells, *Christian Ethics: An Introductory Reader* (Chichester, UK: Blackwell, 2010), 20.

[21] Russell R. Reno, "Stanley Hauerwas," in *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, ed. Paul Manley Scott and William T. Cavanaugh (Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2008), 304.

[22] John Howard Yoder, *The Original Revolution* (Scottdale, PA: Herald, 1971), 83. Cf. Stanley Hauerwas, *In Good Company: The Church as Polis* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 49.

[23] Samuel Wells and Stanley Hauerwas, *In Conversation: Samuel Wells and Stanley Hauerwas*, ed. Maureen Knudsen Langdoc (New York: Church, 2020), 12.

[24] Reno summarises the range of uses "at times, [Hauerwas] seems to advance an (unconvincing) historical thesis about the 'fall' of the primitive church into captivity to worldly vanity and illusions of social significance. At other times, he uses 'Constantinianism' as a rhetorical device for sharpening contrasts […] but most often, Hauerwas uses the term 'Constantinianism' to denote the ways in which Christian truth becomes innocuous and weightless". Reno, "Stanley Hauerwas," 313.

actions, by which a man acquires a moral history befitting his nature as a self-determining being".[25] His proclivity toward virtue ethics was influenced by scholars such as Alasdair MacIntyre and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, their impact most clearly emerging in *Character and the Christian Life* and *A Community of Character.* Both indicate an axiomatic commitment to character formation as part of Christian discipleship, steering away from decision-making-centric ethics. As David Burrell describes, "[Hauerwas] reminds us, what we can do is to help create a context more conducive to our deciding one way than another".[26]

According to Samuel Wells, "the best introduction to [Hauerwas's] work" is *The Peaceable Kingdom*, and it is the most "systematic" approach to Hauerwas's ethics.[27] In particular, Hauerwas elucidates character formation to incorporate narrative, tradition, and community. Hauerwas's own summary includes: "(1) the recovery of the virtues, (2) narrative for the intelligibility of an action description, (3) the church as the place where people are formed in virtue and (4) the significance of nonviolence as the hallmark Christian practice".[28] This summary alone indicates a substantial potential for a pentecostal-Hauerwasian dialogue, particularly given some of the emphases summarised

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[25] Hauerwas, *Character and the Christian Life*, 11. Reno contends that Hauerwas's work written post-1975 is primarily a concern of "density": depth, not breadth. Hence, there is not a systematic approach to ethics available, but rather Hauerwas chooses to dive into moral issues and the church's response to them. In Reno's words: "[Hauerwas] wants to understand the particular ways the lives of Christians take on weight and solidity". Reno, "Stanley Hauerwas," 306.

[26] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, ix.

[27] Wells, *Christian Ethics*, 20. *The Peaceable Kingdom* challenges approaches to Christian ethics buttressed by deontological or utilitarian tendencies and proposes the alternatives Hauerwas considers more commensurate with Christianity.

[28] Stanley Hauerwas, *A Cross-Shattered Church: Reclaiming the Theological Heart of Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2009), 145. Quoted in Sean Larsen, "How I Think Hauerwas Thinks about Theology," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 69, no. 1 (2016): 22. David Gill summarises Hauerwas's emphases as "the ethical authority of Scripture, the centrality of Jesus Christ, the importance of the Church as a body distinct from the world in crucial ways, and the importance of ongoing discipleship and sanctification of Christian character". David W. Gill, review of *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics*, by Stanley Hauerwas, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 28, no. 4 (1985): 478.

in chapter 3, which included a holiness orientation, narrative spirituality, and ecclesial separatism.[29]

Not only do these three characteristics make a strong connection to pentecostalism possible, they help to form the structure of the forthcoming analysis.[30] Some of Hauerwas's ideas, particularly his ecclesiology, echo the practices of the quasi-sectarian-orientated early pentecostals who not only identified as being separate from the world but who were markedly suspicious of it and its attendant secularisation.[31] His ecclesiology may also account for some of the support he has garnered from "theologically orthodox" commentators who might otherwise have been his critics. For example, they "welcome his call for increased emphasis on the visibility of the church, insofar as he offers a corrective to liberal and liberationist theological programs that tend to reduce the church to a movement for social democracy [welcoming also] his bold criticisms of secularist liberalism as an ideology intent on excluding the voice of theology from public discussion".[32]

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[29] I will begin using the term Hauerwasian to describe the character of Hauerwas's theological ethics. This term has been used in Hauerwas scholarship by Healy, *Hauerwas*, 38; Miika Tolonen, *Witness Is Presence: Reading Stanley Hauerwas in a Nordic Setting* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2014); Gerard Mannion, *Ecclesiology and Postmodernity: Questions for the Church in Our Time* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2017).

[30] As an aside, these Hauerwasian characteristics also resonate with classic Christian conservatism, which may lead to misguided assumptions regarding Hauerwas's thinking. But he clarifies that, "[while] some may find my position at some points quite conservative and at others very liberal, I have no real interest in the labels and hope merely to say what I believe to be true to the character of […] God". This is a welcome statement for those who consider his work to be at the other extreme and at times relativistic, since "Theology is not a matter of being liberal or conservative but a matter of truth". Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, xviii. Reno notes that, in part, Hauerwas's "political theology systematically undercuts the conceptual assumptions that give rise to such polar options in modernity". Reno, "Stanley Hauerwas," 312.

[31] The early pentecostals were also suspicious of mainline churches and their practices but Donald Miller notes that this has diminished over time. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 60; Donald E. Miller, "The New Face of Global Christianity: The Emergence of 'Progressive Pentecostalism,'" interview by Erin O'Connell, *Religion and Public Life*, April 12, 2006, https://www.pewforum.org/2006/04/12/the-new-face-of-global-christianity-the-emergence-of-progressive-pentecostalism/.

[32] Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, 155–56.

Upon initial investigation, it is tempting to typecast Hauerwas's work as a variation of sectarian conservatism. Larsen warns against direct "repetition" of his thought into evangelical or Roman Catholic contexts, given that should "Hauerwas's work [be] abstracted and merely copied onto them, his writing's meaning is obscured and recast, usually in an unhelpfully conservative direction".[33] Nevertheless, Stout examines Hauerwas as heralding a type of traditionalism, which, at its core, rejects modern politics in a near totalising fashion on the basis that what it has produced in people is "self-interest" and "individualism".[34] There is much about conservatism that Hauerwas finds distasteful, but he is equally if not more concerned about the "tyranny of rationality" fuelled by its pretentious appeal to reason.[35] This tyranny, in Hauerwas's mind, has paralleled and is part of the ideological take-over of secular liberalism.

His later work demonstrates how secular rationalities have infiltrated the church, which he contends has strayed from an ethic of virtue and character. This infiltration includes the adoption of foreign methodologies, as well as the more covert secular takeover of Christian ethics. Hauerwas identifies that these shifts have long been developing, and of his formative years, Cavanaugh writes, "Stanley read Barth and, in [his] own words, was stunned to discover that Barth had stood against the Nazis while the liberals had 'given up the Jews' in Europe".[36] This realisation might partially explain not

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[33] Larsen, "How I Think Hauerwas Thinks," 26. For example, feminist Gloria Albrecht. While she concurs with a great many of Hauerwas's propositions, including the interrelationship between narratives, traditions, character formation etc. as mechanisms that produce kinds of people who bear particular virtues, she also critiques him. Gloria H. Albrecht, *The Character of Our Communities: Toward an Ethic of Liberation for the Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1995). Where she diverges is the caution that, as Stout describes, "we do need to look at how societies create the kinds of people that inhabit them […] according to Albrecht, […] Hauerwas is insensitive to a range of vices that his form of traditionalism fosters". Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, 149.

[34] Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, 117.

[35] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 26. Hauerwas is not alone in this regard. Pentecostal philosopher James Smith (who was discussed in chapter 3) labels this "the doctrine of secularism", which remains powerful in both the United States and in Europe, and can be used to cure "the disease of religious belief and 'superstition'". Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 56.

[36] Cavanaugh, "Stan the Man", 20.

just Hauerwas's suspicion but his outright rejection of prevailing theological and ethical ideology, and his categorisation of attendant ideas as being akin to liberalism.

It is important to recognise a possible distinction here between liberal theology and what might be unhelpfully caricatured as "mainstream". While many of the positions that Hauerwas rejects might be considered "mainstream", it would be wrong to assume that he rejects the totality of Christian tradition.[37] Furthermore, it may be the case that Hauerwas "distrusts" systematics, but his suspicion does not preclude a possible dialogue. Healy notes that "amongst systematic theologians, Hauerwas has often favoured Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer as conversation partners".[38] Healy later argues "that a comparison with Friedrich Schleiermacher reveals many common elements, both methodologically and materially, such that Hauerwas can usefully be read in relation to Schleiermacher […] Hauerwas adopts many of the same themes as Schleiermacher, not least his ecclesiocentric rather than theocentric approach".[39] Given Healy's argument, it more helpful at this point to distinguish between mainstream theology in which Hauerwas finds utility through dialogue, and mainstream theology that is predicated on rationality and assumptions imported from a foreign "liberal" framework.

Stout notes that "liberalism" in the Hauerwas vocabulary "is a secularist ideology that masks a discriminatory program for policing what religious people can say in

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[37] Alasdair MacIntyre, John Howard Yoder, and Ludwig Wittgenstein are all noted as key intellectual influences on Hauerwas. David B. Hunsicker and Stanley Hauerwas, *The Making of Stanley Hauerwas: Bridging Barth and Postliberalism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2019), 2–3. In addition to this Hauerwas claims to be a "Barthian". Stanley Hauerwas, *Hannah's Child: A Theologian's Memoir* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2012), 14, 87. In terms of more established Christian tradition, scattered throughout Hauerwas's biography are references to the work of Wesley, as well as Augustine of Hippo, Thomas Aquinas, and the secular virtue tradition of Aristotle, indicating the variety of influences and elements of the historical theological guild that integrate with his broader corpus. Ibid., 108, 44, 61. See also his work on Aristotle and Aquinas in Hauerwas, *Character and the Christian Life*.

[38] Healy, *Hauerwas*, 15. Healy argues that Hauerwas is not closed to systematics in totality, given his dialogue with systematic theologians such as Barth, particularly in Stanley Hauerwas, *With the Grain of the Universe: The Church's Witness and Natural Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013), 141–241. See also Stanley Hauerwas, *Performing the Faith: Bonhoeffer and the Practice of Nonviolence* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), 33–72; Healy, *Hauerwas*, 38.

[39] Healy, *Hauerwas*, 15.

public".[40] However, what emerges is a far more complex and powerful comprehension of "liberalism" in the Hauerwasian worldview.[41] Given the term is used generously throughout his work, it is worth establishing how Hauerwas employs it:

> Liberalism, in its many forms and versions, presupposes that every society can be organized without any narrative that is commonly held to be true. As a result it tempts us to believe that freedom and rationality are independent of narrative— that is, we are free to the extent that we have no story. Liberalism is, therefore, particularly pernicious to the extent it prevents us from understanding how deeply we are captured by its account of existence.[42]

This paradigm infiltrates much of Hauerwas's work and provides a lens through which he focuses his critique of traditional approaches to Christian ethics, simultaneously insisting that churches maintain an ethic distinct, and quarantined, from secular ideology—specifically assumptions intrinsic to liberalism.[43]

While there are shared critiques of the Hauerwas corpus, there is much to be

[40] Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, 75.

[41] Stout finds MacIntyre's and, by extension, Hauerwas's use of the term "liberal, liberal society/project" problematic, so much so he advocates for its removal from social ethics dialogue. On the one hand he suggests that it retains its utility as a term only if it is redefined to the general reckoning of the evolution of society alongside pluralistic realities, yet on the other hand, he suggests it should be dispensed with as too complex and multifaceted to be used in the way that these commentators have employed it. Ibid., 129. Nevertheless, many of the great liberal Protestant writings have influenced Hauerwas's ideas, particularly on narrative as they "at least were still telling the story of Jesus, not just talking about Incarnation in the abstract". Cavanaugh, "Stan the Man", 20.

[42] Stanley Hauerwas, "Reforming Christian Social Ethics: Ten Theses (1981)," in Berkman and Cartwright, *Hauerwas Reader*, 114. Although he does not have these specific arguments in mind, James Smith, in contending for the recognition of a pentecostal worldview and its attendent contributions, suggests that its dismissal as simplistic and "lacking scientific and rational" architecture is as much of a worldview as what is being argued for, and therefore it is subject to "a constellation of commitments that narrates the world on the basis of a kind of faith". Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 35.

[43] For example, Longwood notes that, "Hauerwas is concerned with the distinctiveness of the Christian church's ethic". Merle Longwood, review of *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics*, by Stanley Hauerwas, *Interpretation* 40, no. 1 (1986): 76.

celebrated.[44] In particular, the breadth of his program is shared by several Christian ethicists. Healy describes this common ground as Hauerwas's "general agenda" and summarises it as follows:

1. a shift in ethics away from the abstract;
2. a shift in ethics away from theoretical quandaries;
3. emphasis on the reality of the personhood of moral actors, and their historical context;
4. the importance of developing moral persons in the ecclesial context;
5. a rejection of the type of Christianity that myopically focuses on a doctrinal system to the detriment of its attendant transformation;
6. the reciprocal relationship between church practices, community formation, and individual conduct;
7. emphasis on the church as an instrument of discipleship "becoming more fully Christian.[45]

Further to Hauerwas's "general agenda", Healy notes the "particular agenda"—that which sets Hauerwas apart. These distinctions include a desire for: "churches to agree that pacifism is the central Christian norm, that all forms of Constantinianism must be rejected, [and] that liberalism and other traditions have no place in Christian thinking and practice".[46]

Healy acknowledges his own bias in that his critique orientates toward a

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[44] Stephen Webb highlights some common critiques of the Hauerwas corpus, including Hauerwas's overuse of hyperbole; his theology sounding too good to be true; and the intermittent nature of his best work. This can make his writing feel disjointed, particularly if one is reading a compilation of his essays—which happen to be the way many of his books are assembled. Stephen H. Webb, "The Very American Stanley Hauerwas," *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life* 124 (2002): 15–16. This potentially explains the two types of audience that he seems to attract: "evangelicals who want to engage with secular culture more critically, and mainline Christians who want to position themselves outside of secular culture without having to become evangelical." Ibid., 16.

[45] Healy, *Hauerwas*, 6.

[46] Ibid., 7.

"systematic-theological analysis and criticism of his work [while Hauerwas] is concerned to develop a constructive project that originates within, and is ordered toward, a social-ethical perspective".[47] As Webster describes: "Hauerwas says relatively little about the ways in which the moral lives of Christians have their basis in God's creative, redemptive, and perfecting acts. Because of this, the primary stuff of the moral life is the visible work of the ecclesial community; its origin in God is not made a matter for direct reflection".[48] While the lack of systematic ordering in Hauerwas's work may produce "inconsistencies", Healy insists that inconsistencies are to be expected writing that it "simply reflect[s] the way theology should be done. Theology should be engaged in continual revision and […] a matter of thinking within, and guided by, the church".[49] This approach also gives the broader Hauerwas corpus a particular character, described by Webster as "largely occasional and unsystematic [deflecting] questions about first principles [and one that] ranges freely and confidently".[50]

Like Healy, Sean Larsen has provided a summary of Hauerwas's work around four "rules" that govern Hauerwas's thought and theological ethics. He proposes these rules on the basis that Hauerwas's main emphases lack a definitive "centre" and "ordering rationale".[51] Rule number one is "Practical Wisdom" in the vein of MacIntyrian thought, as opposed to "universal reason". Larsen writes that "The middle is the only possible place for 'practical wisdom' to begin [… not from the standpoint of the 'modern man' who] builds an account of universally accessible knowledge for all reasonable people on the foundation of abstract and universal reason".[52] Given Hauerwas writes "from the middle",

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[47] Ibid., 2. Healy summarises the weaknesses into three helpful categories: "methodological, social-theoretical, and theological". He goes on to say: "These weaknesses are sufficient not only to undermine his particular agenda but to cast some doubt on the more general one, too". Ibid., 9. Webster writes that Healy "subjects [Hauerwas's] work, unapologetically, to a 'less modern set of questions' concerned with morality's metaphysical and theological origins". John Webster, "Ecclesiocentrism: A Review of *Hauerwas: A (Very) Critical Introduction*," *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life* 246, no. 10 (2014).

[48] Webster, "Ecclesiocentrism."

[49] Healy, *Hauerwas*, 19–20.

[50] Webster, "Ecclesiocentrism."

[51] Larsen, "How I Think Hauerwas Thinks," 22.

[52] Ibid., 23.

believing social ethics is always personal, and narratively grounded, believing ethics requires a narrative context to create intelligibility, there is "no 'big book' [that] lays out an overarching vision of his career, and no foundational theory [which] establishes the system of his thought".[53] Rule number two is "habit", given the reciprocity of acts and character: what one does and who one is. Larsen writes, "our choices form habits, which make us into characters; therefore ethics should never separate analysis of acts from their agents".[54] Rule three is "attentiveness", highlighting that "[e]thics is primarily moral description and is therefore intrinsically communal".[55] In a sense this rule coalesces with rule one, given both narrative and community are required for the intelligibility of moral discourse: the descriptive language in question is a shared possession of both the community and the narrative it inhabits. The final rule identified by Larsen is "Resources of Past Experiences" and in his estimation it is the only explicitly "Christian" element of Hauerwas's methodological framework.[56] Off the back of rule three, he writes that "Christian moral description derives its intelligibility from the events of Jesus' incarnation, death and resurrection by which Israel's Lord saves creation. Apart from reference to these events, Christian moral description lacks sufficient particularity".[57]

While Webster indicates a theologically systematic deficit in Hauerwas's work, Healy and Larsen demonstrate Hauerwas's work to be systematic, that is, there is structure and organisation to his thought. It is true that it is not systematic in the traditional or Schleiermacherian sense, but one can nonetheless distinguish characteristic traits or "rules" that define the approach to theological ethics beyond simply saying that it is occasional and haphazard. Healy articulates the "macro" organisation of Hauerwas's work, that is, the distinction between the general principles and goals that Hauerwas

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[53] Ibid., 25.

[54] Ibid., 27. "Because acts are intelligible only with reference to the agents and the communities that form the agents, no framework offers an abstract and universally accessible method of moral analysis in order to determine right obligations or just outcomes." Ibid., 37.

[55] Ibid., 29.

[56] "The above [previous] rules about practical wisdom, habit, and moral description are thoroughly neutral with regard to substantive theological commitments. None depend on axioms peculiar to Christianity." Ibid., 32.

[57] Ibid.

shares with other Christian ethicists, and the distinctives that set him apart. This general and particular taxonomy, as outlined by Healy, not only describes the vantage point of Hauerwasian theology, but the trajectory in which it is developing. Similarly, Larsen's summary reveals a structure behind Hauerwas's ethics that corresponds to some of the pentecostal ethics characteristics identified earlier. Both rules one and two reflect the broader virtue tradition from which Hauerwas derives much of his thinking. The resonance with pentecostal ethics emerges in the holiness emphasis. Rules three and four underscore the communal and theological dimensions of Hauerwas's ethics, which are mirrored in the pentecostal world by ecclesiology and Scripture, respectively.

Having considered Hauerwas's agenda and style, I will now provide a more detailed consideration of his arguments. Initially I argue that his rejection of "mainstream" Christian ethics locates him as an "theological outsider", similar to a pentecostal self-understanding, and secondly, his alternative proposals when examined, are materially suitable to further a pentecostal-Hauerwasian dialogue.

4.2 Rejection of "Mainstream" Ethics Methodology and Its Application

A structure to pentecostal ethics is not explicitly articulated in the pentecostal literature, and an existing approach is not endorsed. This ambiguity at least indicates that pentecostalism is not consciously beholden to an established methodology. Moreover, the pentecostals' self-understanding as a peripheral restorationist group locates them on the margins. In particular, the early pentecostal communities perceived themselves as being outside the theological mainstream for a variety of theological, social, and cultural reasons.[58] Similarly, Hauerwas, and his work, sits outside the mainstream, but positively he explicitly rejects existing approaches to ethics, and is dissatisfied with "the establishment"—or what has become "established" ethics methodology. This section explores the rejection by analysing his critique of existing approaches to Christian ethics, including Kingdom ethics, the moral authority of Scripture, natural law, divine command, rules and legislation, and briefly, situation ethics. Some of his arguments are grounded on his own reflections and others on his repudiation of the alliance between secularism and liberal theology.

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[58] Vondey, Pentecostalism, 133–135.

4.2.1 Hauerwas's Critique of "Kingdom Ethics"

Hauerwas's primary problem with ethics that claim to be "Jesus focused" particularly arises from discussions of "kingdom ethics"—the ethical implications evolving from the kingdom's establishment. He notes that the issues often emerge from a kingdom vision either too focused on the earthly dimensions or too focused on the eschatological ones. Regarding the former, he argues that "The scriptures can be scavenged for individual sayings that seem to determine the character of such a Kingdom—love, justice, righteousness. But this strategy is doomed to failure because such norms fail to do justice to the eschatological character of the Kingdom".[59] Furthermore, these characteristics do not survive the dilution and detachment from particular Christian principles; consequently they were, as Reno describes, "absorbed into the therapeutic goals and liberal political framework of twentieth-century American culture".[60] Moreover, Hauerwas writes that the "ethics of love is often but a cover for what is fundamentally an assertion of ethical relativism",[61] and the way we treat others in this kingdom cannot be grounded on appeals to "facile doctrines of tolerance or equality".[62] On the other hand, focusing on the eschatological dimensions could diminish the role and responsibility of the people of God to embody the kingdom in a tangible earthly way, which contravenes Hauerwas's pragmatic social ethics as well as his focus on "habits" and "practices".

While there may well be a subversion of Christian rationality in favour of a "liberal" rationality infiltrating some of these discussions, the "liberal rationalities" may have utility by counterbalancing an extreme emphasis on eschatological dimensions of kingdom

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[59] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 44. There is also a danger, which DeJonge explains in his refutation of Hauerwas's belief that Bonhoeffer was an absolute pacifist, that these "characteristics of the kingdom" can become legalistic, the very sentiment that virtue ethicists want to avoid. Even Bonhoeffer, as DeJonge recalls, labels the peace enthusiasts "legalists because they take peace, which properly serves the gospel, and treat it as the gospel itself". Michael P. DeJonge, "Bonhoeffer's Non-Commitment to Nonviolence: A Response to Stanley Hauerwas," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 44, no. 2 (2016): 389.

[60] Reno, "Stanley Hauerwas," 307.

[61] Stanley Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue: Essays in Christian Ethical Reflection* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 124.

[62] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 51.

ethics. For example, Stout has critiqued Hauerwas for being too dismissive of the contribution of liberalism. Hauerwas and his allies, apparently, fail to recognise that liberalism has produced some positive evolutions, commensurate with a way of life Hauerwas would likely support. These values include freedom of speech and gender equality.[63]

Hauerwas demarcates the conversation by an appeal, firstly, to Origen's assertion, "Jesus is the autobasileia—the Kingdom in person",[64] and secondly, to the widely held agreement on the nature of the kingdom best summarised by Walter Kasper as being "totally and exclusively God's doing. It cannot be earned by religious or moral effort, imposed by political struggle, or projected in calculations. We cannot plan for it, organize it, make it, or build it, we cannot invent it or imagine it. It is given, appointed. We can only inherit it".[65] It is the synthesis of these two realities that keeps the extremes in check, the former reminds the church that the kingdom was lived out by Jesus "in the world" yet the latter reminds the church that it is only the conduit, not the broker, of the kingdom.[66]

While Jesus as "kingdom embodiment" is one way in which the Jesus story—if indeed we accept the premise that there is only one version of the Jesus story[67]—is relevant for social ethics, often Jesus is dismissed on the grounds of either his irrelevance or discontinuity with contemporary moral discourse. Hauerwas leverages Ernst Troeltsch's work which characterises the life of Jesus as primarily religious in orientation.

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[63] Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, 118.

[64] Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and Arthur C. Coxe, *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Origenes* (New York: Scribners, 1926), 498. Quoted in Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 45.

[65] Walter Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, new ed. (London: Bloomsbury, 2011), 69. Although the original edition (published in the 1970s) argues this position, it appears that his later work retains this position; for example, see Walter Kasper, *The Gospel of Jesus Christ* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2015).

[66] It is important to note at this stage that Hauerwas has been criticised for "exaggerat[ing] his claims [and] overstating his criticisms". Harlan Beckley, review of *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic*, by Stanley Hauerwas, *Interpretation* 36, no. 3 (1982): 301. Perhaps these points are examples of this. However, these proclivities are best explained by the fact that "kingdom" language seems to indicate a collection of moral guidelines, which are appealing for normative ethical discourse.

[67] L. Gordon Tait, review of *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic*, by Stanley Hauerwas, *Christian Century* 98, no. 32 (1981): 1032.

Troeltsch argues that Jesus' life primarily "deal[s] with such questions as the salvation of the soul, monotheism, life after death" and thus has minimal utility for discerning and addressing social issues.[68] Hauerwas paraphrases Troeltsch's arguments against Jesus as an authority on ethical matters as follows:

1. he had an interim ethic, or

2. he was a simple rural figure caring little about problems of complex organizations, or

3. he had no power or control over the political and social fortunes of his society, or

4. he did not deal with social change but offered new possibility for self-understanding, or

5. he was a radical monotheist who relativized all temporal values, or finally

6. Jesus came to provide forgiveness, not an ethic.[69]

An approach to Jesus such as this one simply promotes the idea that Jesus does not supply anything relevant to ethics discourse, and simultaneously relegates Christianity to the periphery, where secularism would have it reside. Given the contrast above, clearly a "what would Jesus do? ethic" or "kingdom morality" is not only vulnerable to the extremes—that is, Jesus came to save souls versus Jesus came to feed the hungry—but it is also dependent on other factors to make this ethic intelligible enough to inform concrete ethical discourse. Rather than falling into lockstep with Yoder, who argues that the New Testament's account of Jesus provides the blueprint for ecclesial practice, Hauerwas reverses the position; in Hay's words: "the church must be a truthful and peaceable community in order to be able to read the New Testament's portrayal of Jesus rightly [...] Only a community already formed by the story of the kingdom of God can begin

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[68] Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 39–40.

[69] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 38. See also Troeltsch, *Social Teaching*.

to read scripture rightly".[70] To that end we will turn to the challenges Hauerwas identifies with the way Scripture is deployed in Christian ethics and the approaches he favours.

4.2.2 Hauerwas, Scripture and Biblical Ethics

The issues Hauerwas raises regarding the way the Bible is employed in Christian ethics can be grouped into two broad categories. Firstly, there is the degree to which the Bible is declared to have a "revealed morality" from which it derives its authority, commonly claimed in theologically conservative traditions, including pentecostalism. (Hauerwas's critique of "divine command ethics", will be considered separately.) And secondly, there is the tendency for the Bible to be treated as possessing a more general authority, better understood either through biblical scholarship or with reference to supplementary rationalities. His solution is to insist that the authority of Scripture is dependent on its attachment to a community that accepts and embodies an authoritative narrative. Helpful summaries of Hauerwasian biblical ethics and interpretation are presented by Darren Sarisky and Richard Hays. The latter writes that it "is not easy to see how Hauerwas can hold different elements together in a coherent hermeneutical position".[71] Nevertheless, Hays endeavours to explore how the New Testament functions in Hauerwas's ethical worldview with a view to clarify the underlying methodology of his pacifist position.

Regarding the New Testament, Hauerwas argues: "The assumption that to be ethically significant the Bible must contain some kind of revealed morality not only creates a nest of unfruitful problems but finally betrays the character of the biblical literature. The very idea that the Bible is revealed (or inspired) is a claim that creates more trouble than it is worth".[72] This problem is exacerbated at the extreme, such that fundamentalist readings of the text assume not only revealed morality but a literal revealed morality to be applied outside of an attendant moral tradition. Sarisky describes a further problem with fundamentalism from the Hauerwasian perspective as its failure to "acknowledge itself as a particular tradition that seeks to conform its members to a certain account of

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[70] Hays, *Moral Vision of the New Testament*, 254–55.

[71] Ibid., 254.

[72] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 57.

the good".[73] He goes on to write that in concealing its history, fundamentalism "represents itself as delivering a straightforward, unbiased representation of the biblical text".[74] Therefore, Hauerwas's problems are both theological (the beliefs about the text), and methodological (the narrative nature of the text).

As noted in the opening of this chapter, Hauerwas disagrees with much of "mainstream" Christian ethics, particularly forms that focus on crisis moments.[75] Notwithstanding the disagreement, he highlights how the misguided focus on crisis in "mainstream" traditions explains why some Scripture is elevated as being more ethically instructive than other Scripture. For example: "[The] Decalogue, the Sermon on the Mount, Wisdom books, the command to love—that fit our intuitive assumptions about what an ethic should look like".[76] However, without a systematic explanation from Hauerwas on the theological nature of Scripture that can inform the selectivity, his deployment of Scriptures for moral purposes remains bespoke. Hays highlights that Hauerwas has made no "systematic attempt to work the full range of the canon into his synthesis"[77] and much of the Bible therefore seems superfluous to Hauerwas's "functional canon".[78] In an effort to account for these criticisms, Hauerwas's strategy seems to be either to ignore the passages that contradict or appear extraneous to his work or to "actively celebrate the canon's messy complexity".[79]

Unfortunately, this approach only serves to exacerbate Hauerwas's initial concern with the phraseology "biblical ethics" by "confus[ing] the questions of ethics in the scripture with the ethical use of scripture, but [it also] has the unfortunate effect of separating and abstracting the ethics from the religious (and narrative) contexts that

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[73] Darren Sarisky, *Scriptural Interpretation: A Theological Exploration* (Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 193.

[74] Ibid.

[75] For a detailed analysis of the tensions between "event-directed" ethics and "personhood-directed" ethics, see Joseph A. Selling, "Understanding the Moral Event: The Polarity Model of Ethical Discourse," *Louvain Studies* 34 (2009): 19–38.

[76] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 57.

[77] Hays, *Moral Vision of the New Testament*, 260.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid., 261.

make them intelligible".[80] I should note at this point that the ACC refers to "biblical ethics", and therefore some conception of what Hauerwas is discussing is alive and well in pentecostal discourse.[81] If Hauerwas's position is credible, then the rules in the Scriptures garner authority, based not on their mere existence in the canon but on some other criterion (or criteria). In other words, biblical ethics needs to be contextualised.

The second problem Hauerwas highlights in biblical ethics is the assumption that Scripture embodies a more generic authority that is moderated and filtered by appealing to supplementary sources. For example, historical-critical readings of the Bible would claim that the Bible has authority but clarify its location and relevance within its original historical context. In some ways, this approach serves as a counterbalance to the more linear fundamentalist readings of revealed morality noted above, without capitulating to the freewheeling creativity of pure narrative hermeneutics.[82] Nevertheless, further work is required to establish its authority in the "here and now" and occurs, sometimes, at the expense of present-day applicability. This tension is important because biblical ethics must account for whether the Bible has the capacity to speak to issues relevant to the broader society or whether it is primarily locked into a historical locus. Hauerwas does not place his hope in biblical scholarship, however, and argues that the library of resources on biblical ethics can only go as far as articulating a particular scholar's view of biblical theology.[83]

While both Hauerwas and scholars who practise the historical-critical method oppose fundamentalism as a methodology, they do so for different reasons. Consequently, Hauerwas's criticism of "plain textual" meaning pedaled by fundamentalists and the reliance on historical knowledge by biblical scholars of the historical schools are cut from the same cloth. That is, they are firmly imbedded in a

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[80] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 57.

[81] For detailed examples, see chapter 2, sections 2.2–2.5.

[82] Such as those described by Poirier in chapter 1, section 1.2.5. Poirier, "Narrative Theology and Pentecostal Commitments," 70.

[83] "He [Hauerwas] has essentially no interest in reconstructing the world behind the text. Just as he spends little energy on historical background, Hauerwas does not dedicate much space in his commentary to lexical analysis, nor is he concerned to identify the genre of Matthew any more precisely than to call it simply narrative." Sarisky, *Scriptural Interpretation*, 153.

"tradition" that supplies a "rationality" and they both see interpretation as "grasping the author intention as the text expresses it".[84] Sarisky sees value within the main thrust of Hauerwas's argument—that "the communities he has in his sights do often promote an ideal of detachment that conceals a set of specific modern philosophical commitments [unmasking] their pretension to pristine objectivity". [85] Treating the Bible as a collection of historical texts, though they might carry historical authority, still requires a theological position to clarify the nature of its authority beyond history, given that, "[f]or Christian ethics the Bible is not just a collection of texts but scripture that makes normative claims on a community".[86] This type of claim is difficult to uphold by mere reference to historical and sociological context.

According to David Kelsey, an additional and unhelpful way in which the Bible's "general authority" is employed in ethics lies in moments when Scripture becomes "a final court of appeals for theological disputes".[87] This highlights the absence, again, of one uniform approach to the Bible, given that in this method, Scripture has a veto, rather than a voice. Additionally, the existence of a veto does not provide a rationale behind scriptural selectivity beyond the need to resolve theological contention. More particularly, Hauerwas argues that giving Scripture a veto on ethical issues based on appeals to apparent "central biblical themes or images, like love [is insufficient as] it turns into an abstraction that cannot be biblically justified".[88] The biggest challenge in this regard is that it delegitimises the need to "appeal to scripture" as *de facto* authority if it is merely referencing "general principles"[89] that appear to have secular justification.

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[84] Ibid., 193.

[85] Ibid., 194.

[86] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 56.

[87] David Kelsey, *The Uses of Scriptures in Recent Theology* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1975), 14–15. Quoted in Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 64.

[88] Ibid., 58.

[89] "This situation is not peculiar to the Christian community, for the very meaning of authority is community dependent. Though authority is often confused with power or coercion, it draws its life from community in a quite different manner. Like power, authority is directive; unlike power, however, it takes its rationale not from the deficiencies of community but from the intrinsic demands of a common life. The meaning of authority must be grounded in a community's self-understanding, which is embodied in its

Given these generalist approaches are unacceptable in Hauerwas's mind, on both theological and methodological grounds, Hays writes: "We can see why Hauerwas maintains that it is a methodological mistake to ask how Scripture should be 'used' in Christian ethics. The question assumes that the ethicist has some privileged epistemological vantage point external to the Bible that allows one first to determine the meaning of the text and then to draw out useful tidbits of that meaning for the construction of an ethical system".[90] He describes Hauerwas's alternative "The meaning of the text is known only for those who participate in a community whose identity is shaped by the story of Jesus and whose practices therefore already embody an ethic specifically determined by that story".[91] While a comprehensive analysis of Hauerwas's narrative ethics will follow in chapter 5, the solution he proposes to remedy the mystery of biblical authority pertains to Scripture's relationship to the tradition to which it testifies.

Sarisky writes that Hauerwas is among those who "qualify as theologians of retrieval: that is, they are theologians with an attitude toward the legacies of the Christian tradition that is not uncritical of the past, but that sees the tradition's major texts as resources for the present".[92] Hauerwas contends that "the authority of scripture derives its intelligibility from the existence of a community that knows its life depends on faithful remembering of God's care of his creation through the calling of Israel and the life of Jesus".[93] He believes that rules do not receive their significance from the source of authority (or that they are an expression of God's will) but from the narrative context in which they arise. Using the Ten Commandments to demonstrate the narrative function, he suggests that:

> The Decalogue is part of the covenant of God with Israel. Divorced from
> that covenant it makes no sense. God does indeed command obedience,

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habits, customs, laws, and traditions; for this embodiment constitutes the community's pledge to provide the means for an individual more nearly to approach the truth." Ibid., 60.

[90] Hays, *Moral Vision of the New Testament*, 256.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Sarisky, *Scriptural Interpretation*, 31.

[93] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 53.

but our God is the God who "brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Deut 5:6). Because of this action the demand "You shall have no other god before me" can be made.[94]

Not only does this approach repudiate literalist readings of the text, given that the text can only be understood with respect to its narrative, but it also underscores the necessity of a tradition within which the Bible should be read. According to Blenkinsopp, the canon "directs our attention to the tradition which it mediates".[95] If this general rule is to be accepted, then further clarifications are necessary, including those about which traditions mediate Scripture authoritatively, or, in Hauerwasian terms, those about whether authoritative narratives exist outside the biblical story.

Given the lack of exegetical work on the one hand, and selectivity on the other, it is difficult to "pin down" how Hauerwas justifies his deeply held "biblical" positions on ethical issues such as pacifism. In this regard, he refers to the story of Jesus as synonymous with the collection of gospel narratives.[96] With regard to his ethic of nonviolence specifically, "he does not undertake any of the exegetical practices necessary to demonstrate how the specific language of the text might or might not warrant an ethic of nonviolence".[97] Rather, preferring to take the text as a whole, Hays insists that:

onerous interpretive tasks are said to be rendered unnecessary by participation in a community that already rightly knows and practices what the texts means […] the reader must be a pacifist first; then he or she will see that the text teaches nonviolence. But can a nonpacifist reader ever be changed by reading such a text?

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[94] Ibid., 23. See also Dempster, a pentecostal who argues that "It is within the context of covenant […] that the Ten Commandments and the law codes of Israel are to be preparsly interpreted". Dempster, "Pentecostal Social Concern," 134.

[95] Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Prophecy and Canon: A Contribution to the Study of Jewish Origins* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), 152.

[96] When quoting Scripture, Hauerwas rarely seeks "to justify his reading of the passage against alternative possibilities or to develop theological insights from careful analysis of its language or structure". Hays, *Moral Vision of the New Testament*, 258–59.

[97] Ibid., 259.

Seemingly, Hauerwas's account leaves no possibility for such an event to occur. Nor does he explain how the overwhelmingly nonpacifist Christian tradition can be challenged or corrected by a minority reading such as the one that he offers.[98]

The remedies to these procedural challenges are not immediately obvious. The methodological stalemate will be addressed later, but what has emerged in this short analysis of Hauerwas and Scripture is Hauerwas's axiomatic dependence on tradition as the judge, jury, and executioner of any "biblically informed" moral mandate.

The Hauerwasian approach thus undermines the literalist and generalist strategies, given their dependence on the pre-eminence of Scripture, yet at the same time it is not explicit on how one may articulate a biblically informed ethic. Returning briefly to literalist readings, the entire discussion of biblical authority's relationship to ethics seems to be a red herring, given literalist readings of the Bible can be invoked quarantined from narrative (and historical) context. On the other hand, general and vague appeals to Scripture are often made, grounded on an alternate narrative authority, rendering the need for biblical authority superfluous. This is not to say that Hauerwas does not believe that Scripture has authority; on the contrary, Scripture features prominently throughout his work. He is just very careful to define how the Bible acquires its authority and in what ways its use is authoritative.

Consequently, "Hauerwas's descriptions of the content of the New Testament are, by his own account, eclectic and derivative [and clearly] mediated by tradition [and] profoundly dependent upon the writings of great predecessors who have pursued the exegetical task with a rigor that he himself declines to attempt".[99] If narrative significance is what undergirds the authority of Scripture, then according to Hauerwas, the authoritative element can be easily lost, either amidst a shifting narrative, or by removing the moral context from the narrative context. He argues as follows: "But when one begins to look to an ethic sufficient for guiding the wider society, the narrative aspects of scripture have to be ignored. Such an ethic, though often claimed to be biblically 'inspired' or 'informed', must be freed from the narratives of scripture if it is to be the basis for

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[98] Ibid.

[99] Ibid., 260.

judging or making common cause with those who do not share those narratives in their own history".[100] We are therefore left with few options to justify the use of Scripture other than appealing outside of its jurisdiction. The language "biblical ethic" is subsequently misleading as it tends to be used interchangeably with "universal ethic". Hauerwas writes that "What is presented as [a] biblical ethic has been made over into a universal ethic [depending primarily] on reason or nature".[101] Given his reference to the language of reason and nature, I will now review Hauerwas's criticisms of the ethical model that authenticates these frames of reference: natural law ethics.

4.2.3 Hauerwas's Opposition to Natural Law Ethics

Proponents of natural law ethics insist that morality can be known through principles grounded in the natural order and discernible to human reason, despite human opinion or convention.[102] The ontological basis for natural law morality is the claim that God's creative fingerprint is found all over nature and natural law is conceived theologically as general revelation and implies that morality is discoverable due to its embeddedness in

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[100] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 54.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Some argue, for example in the Roman Catholic tradition, that natural law is the "rule of reason". According to Davis, "The Natural Law is nothing else than the rational creature's participation in the Eternal Law […] Practically Natural law means for us that which is in accord with right reason". Henry Davis, *Moral and Pastoral Theology: A Summary* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1952), 125–27. However, John Grabowski and Michael Naughton have argued that even within the Catholic tradition, natural law can refer to distinct dimensions of moral reasoning and that theologians such as Aquinas employed elements of both reason and nature. John S. Grabowski and Michael J. Naughton, "Catholic Social and Sexual Ethics: Inconsistent or Organic?," *The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review* 57, no. 4 (1993): 557–61. These are distinguished as, firstly, "order of reason" natural law, which is grounded on human rationality and is therefore focused, in ethical terms, on the reasoning of the moral agent, and secondly, "order of nature" natural law, which places a greater emphasis on biological factors and therefore underscores a biologically deterministic view of morality. It seems that it is the combination of these, especially insofar as a right reason presupposes the morality of the natural order, that Hauerwas takes aim at.

the natural order.[103] However, natural law has also been adopted by Christian ethics for more practical purposes. For example, natural law is employed in the public setting to provide grounds for Christian positions persuasive to a broad public audience by appealing to shared authorities and common values. The ACC make use of both, referencing natural law as a basis for ethics and articulating various positions in a publicly accessible way.

Despite its broad appeal and strategic potential, Hauerwas outlines seven problems with natural law ethics:

1. It creates a distorted moral psychology, since the description of act is thought to be determined by an observer without reference to the dispositions of the agent.

2. It fails to provide an adequate account of how theological convictions are a morality, i.e., that they are meant not just to describe the world but to form the self and community.

3. It confuses the claim that Christian ethics is an ethic that we should and can commend to anyone with the claim that we can know the content of that ethic by looking at the human.

4. It fails to appreciate that there is no actual consensus of universal morality, but that in fact we live in a fragmented world of many moralities.

5. Because it seems to entail a strong continuity between church and world, natural law ethics fails to provide the critical perspective the church needs to recognize and deal with the challenges presented by our societies and the inherent violence of our world.

6. It ignores the narrative character of Christian convictions by forgetting that nature-grace, creation-redemption are secondary theological

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[103] Healy notes that after the Reformation the necessary connection between natural law and the divine law was also lost and the presupposed separation has perhaps led Hauerwas to reject the former. Healy, *Hauerwas*, 21.

concepts only intelligible in relation to the story of the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Jesus.

7. It tempts us to coerce those who disagree with us, since its presumptions lead us to believe that we always occupy the high ground in any dispute.[104]

Points 2, 3, and 6 stem from his central arguments in favour of narrative theology—a pillar of his theological ethics analysed in chapter 5; and point 1 seems to reiterate his critique of the way traditional ethics concerned with actions eclipses the central role of the moral agent. I think these critiques are reasonable, considering his favouring of narrative ethics but they seem to require the exclusion of natural law ethics altogether. Point 4 is a practical consideration that even if one accepts natural law ethics, the current state of the world is such that it has been unable to foster the kind of moral unity that it seeks to establish. In other words, natural law has failed in its mission. Point 5 refers to the unique role of the church and seems to highlight that in appealing to natural law, particularly in the way that the ACC do, the church loses its distinctive voice in public discourse and invalidates its influence. His priority seems to be that the Christian church should not lose its Christianity in the process of arguing its case—that "Christians must serve the world on their own terms; otherwise the world would have no means to know itself as the world".[105] Although this type of sectarianism might be celebrated by secularists on the assumption that it could marginalise the church's influence, it would not be a hindrance to the church's mission, particularly in Hauerwas's conception. Point 7 is self-evidently problematic: if a particular position is right and good, demonstrable by natural law, in what ways should that position be enforced?—by cultural pressure, legislatively, theocratic imposition? On the theocratic strategy, Hauerwas is conscious of the propensity of the church to invoke natural law to "support authoritarian positions",[106] particularly regarding sexual ethics. A further problem, he states, is that the church, "by

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[104] Point 1 "leads to concentration of judgment about actions from an observer's standpoint that the 'new Catholic moralists' at least claim they want to avoid". Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 63–64.

[105] Hauerwas, "Reforming Christian Social Ethics," 113.

[106] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 64.

attempting to give [sexual ethics] a natural law basis devoid of their theological basis …
appear[s] arbitrary and irrational—thus requiring authoritarian imposition".[107] As natural
law is the way in which the ACC justify some of their positions, this critique retains
relevance. A "this is the way it is" approach is certainly a possibility when natural law is
invoked with little theological context.

Before moving into a discussion on Hauerwas's conception of "divine command"
ethics, and notwithstanding Hauerwas's concerns, it seems as though natural law ethics
need not be dismissed altogether. He does not reject natural law in totality but merely
the assumption that one "must choose between revelation and reason in order to
characterize our knowledge of God and his moral will for us".[108] Natural law's ability to
make certain Christian theological positions accessible to the outside world, in particular
political engagement, demonstrates its pragmatic appeal.[109] Despite Hauerwas's
totalising rejection of liberal rationality, Larsen writes that Hauerwas "is not inconsistent
with Christian political engagement, even at the level of public policy, so long as such
engagement reflects God's rule and thus sustains the integrity necessary for Christian
truth claims to remain 'Christian' and 'truth claims' on their own terms".[110] Hauerwas's
caution therefore stands, that Christian ethics needs to retain its "Christian-ness", but
does not mitigate the "limbo-like" state that Longwood suggests Hauerwas's arguments
leave us in. He writes that Hauerwas provides no assessment as to the "ways in which
public principles, or even public virtues, can be articulated and formed so as to provide a

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[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid., 69.

[109] Hauerwas is consistent in reminding his readers that he is primarily writing Christian ethics for
Christians, so it seems to be the case that he sees the pursuit of natural law ethics as a waste of time. In
Longwood's review, he makes the following assessment: "Christian social ethics, then, is not a 'natural
law' ethic for everybody but an ethic for Christians, who learn what it is to be moral by being a part of the
servant community". Longwood, review of *The Peaceable Kingdom*, 76.

[110] "The witness of the church, then, always political, depends primarily on its faithfulness to offering
moral descriptions of the world from the gospel rather than a desire to shape favorable outcomes for
Christians." Larsen, "How I Think Hauerwas Thinks," 36.

basis for members of different communities to communicate with each other about matters for the common good of their shared society".[111]

Given the choice to lean one way or the other, Hauerwas's loyalty is with narrative. To succumb to pressure that creates secular justification for rules and principles circumvents one of Hauerwas's major contentions: that there is no such thing as "good ethics" absent of qualifiers that represent their narrative context. Similarly, pentecostals are equally suspicious of "secularism", so identifying the secular influences Hauerwas describes highlights a pentecostal concern and "makes room" for alternative approaches, like narrative, to arise. In summary, enthroning natural law renders narrative redundant.

4.2.4 Hauerwas and Divine Command

Having discussed and critiqued the use of natural law, Hauerwas addresses "divine command ethics", a second category of deontology that appeals to sacred texts as the basis of commands and principles. One cannot escape the fact that the Scriptures are full of law-like pronouncements, but as Hauerwas reminds us, "they are certainly never treated as an end in themselves or as capable of independent justification".[112] This argument reinforces his critique of Scripture divorced from narrative, outlined above. Divine command ethics, however, unlike shallow literalism or natural law, does not dispel narrative on its quest to yield moral authority. Divine command can to some degree safeguard narrative, whereas natural law dispels or replaces it. Narrative is employed in the divine command framework as a basis for its intelligibility and additionally to moderate the extremes of fundamentalist readings. He writes, "The biblical Commandments do not command us arbitrarily; rather they call us to be holy as God is holy, as we have learned of holiness through God's faithfulness to us".[113] Such significance can only be justified on the anchor of narrative, or the biblical commandments become devoid of meaning. He also cites Gerard Hughes's hermeneutical point:

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[111] Longwood, review of *The Peaceable Kingdom*, 77.

[112] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 19.

[113] Ibid., 67.

It is characteristic of the Christian religion that God reveals himself in history, and therefore in a particular culture at a particular time and place. The texts of Christian tradition in which that revelation is communicated to us are, by the same token, texts of a particular human community at different periods of its development. As such, these texts raise all the philosophical problems of interpretation and translation raised by any text. It follows that the meaning of these texts cannot simply be read off automatically from the texts themselves. In order to establish their meaning we have to have recourse to other assumptions and arguments, which the texts themselves do not provide.[114]

Hughes provides a critical point for Hauerwas as it ties together the importance of hermeneutics and the priority he gives to narrative, in a sense providing an inroad for evangelicalism with the methodology he is trying to espouse. It does not however clarify the origin of morality, to which the evangelicals might suggest that morality is grounded in the character of God, and thus would not vary based on changing cultures and narratives. From an evangelical perspective, therefore, the commands of God can be recognised as ethical content despite their context, not because of it.[115] In my estimation, Hauerwas would disagree and argue that morality necessarily arises from a narrative context or at least derives its intelligibility, and therefore its significance, from it. The connection, he argues, is perhaps more explicit than we realise: "Revelation is reasonable if we place it within the ongoing story of God's calling of Israel and his redemption brought in Christ".[116]

4.2.5 Hauerwas, Rules and Legislation

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[114] Gerard J. Hughes, *Authority in Morals: An Essay in Chrisitan Ethics* (London: Heythrop Monographs, 1978), v–vi. Quoted in Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 65.

[115] For example, the content of the Decalogue, such as prohibitions against murder, theft, and covetousness, is universally applicable because it is grounded on the goodness of God.

[116] "[And] Rather, God as creator is a reminder that we are creatures who are participants and actors in his world. We are such actors exactly because we have a nature that is open to historical determination." Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 65.

Hauerwas does not suggest that rules have no utility in society; indeed, he does not discuss rules at great length at all. Indeed, Hays writes, "rules and principles play little role in [Hauerwas's] constructive ethic".[117] Hauerwas only seeks to explain the emphasis on rules as an actuality and that societies value them to differing degrees, not to argue for or against their utility. (Presumably he is referring to US society, but similar observations could be made across the west.[118]) One of his critiques, however, is that they act as another tool, to provide "the appearance of ensuring the objectivity we otherwise find lacking in our individual decisions and judgments".[119] They provide both a justification for relenting on certain behaviours and a tool for demonstrating goodness. Their strength lies in their separation from the individual.

The ACC documentary analysis in chapter 2 revealed examples of both support and rejection of particular laws, and the ACC even endorsed legislation to enshrine various moral positions. I believe this tendency runs counter to Hauerwas's ideas. While he might agree with many ACC moral positions, he would likely take issue with their justifications, particularly given he consistently begins his ethics from the vantage point of character and narrative. As the ACC appear to be missing an explanation or, indeed, any reference to either character or narrative, Hauerwas would likely identify this absence as a fundamental problem with the ACC's ethics.

There is no evidence that Hauerwas would support or oppose specific legislation, or the instrumentality of law-making; his concern for rules is secondary to the nature of community. Moreover, an emphasis on rules has eclipsed the virtues, and even if virtues give rise to a set of rules or standards, "we have failed to see that the virtues needed can only be displayed by drawing on a particular community's account of the good. And that

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[117] Hays, *Moral Vision of the New Testament*, 261.

[118] Reno has noted that Hauerwas perceives America to be a profound force of social transformation, insofar as it has potential to absorb everything it encounters. Much of his criticism of the liberal protestant project exists therefore in this context, the one he is primarily challenging. Russell R. Reno, "Stanley Hauerwas and the Liberal Protestant Project," *Modern Theology* 28, no. 2 (2012): 324. Herman Paul also agrees that Hauerwas's critiques stand across the west, particularly regarding the influence of secularism, whether it be American liberalism, civic religion, or European secularism. Paul, "Stanley Hauerwas," 28.

[119] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 19.

account necessarily takes the form of a narrative".[120] Furthermore, he says, "There is no point that can be separated from the story. The narratives through which we learn of God are the point. Stories are not substitute explanations we can someday hope to supplant with more straightforward accounts".[121] It is also erroneous to ignore virtue's connection with teleology, which will be explored in section 5.3.4.3 in relation to Hauerwas's theological anthropology. At best, he has indicated that narratives, in supplying intelligibility to virtues, do move in a certain direction or toward a goal, congruent with the respective narrative. Selling, for instance, recognises that much of the language of virtues appears to be shared with the language of teleology, which is most explicitly seen when discussing moral attitudes, tendencies, and motivations.[122] It follows, therefore, that deontological laws and rules arising from a liberal account of the good would be intensely flawed in Hauerwas's eyes.

4.2.6 Hauerwas and Situation Ethics

Notwithstanding the absence of a clear elucidation of teleological ethics in Hauerwas's work, situation ethics is relevant on two fronts: the contextual and the perceptual needs of Christian ethics.[123] Healy argues that the influx of Hauerwas's ethics into the scholarly community coincided with the time when "ethicists were still engaged in assessing Joseph Fletcher's 'situation ethics'".[124] I will therefore briefly attend to Hauerwas's rejection of situation ethics before I conclude the findings of this chapter. Although situation ethics claims to attend to questions unanswered in sacred texts by appealing to "love as a universal law", this solution does not seem to answer any of Hauerwas's primary concerns. There is, however, some limited agreement between the two. For example,

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[120] Ibid., 22.

[121] Ibid., 26.

[122] "Virtues constitute the abiding (habitual) tendencies of the person to move in a particular direction, toward a particular perspective, and ultimately toward particular ends or goals. In this sense, one can say that one is attracted toward the achievement of an end [telos]." Selling, "Understanding the Moral Event," 26.

[123] Webster frames the former as a question: "In what historical trajectory may Hauerwas's work be placed?" Webster, "Ecclesiocentrism."

[124] Healy, *Hauerwas*, 24–25.

they both oppose the abstract and legalistic addressing of ethical issues, desiring ethics move "beyond legalism and command theories without falling into individualistic antinomianism".[125]

The major point of disagreement seems to be the nature of ethical decision-making itself. Hauerwas rejected Fletcher's position, which still held to the idea that an individual decision is the focal point of ethics.[126] Hauerwas's contribution includes that "scripture creates more than a world; it shapes a community which is the bearer of that world. Without that community, claims about the moral authority of scripture—or rather the very idea of scripture itself—make no sense". [127] Similarly, Fletcher's solitary ethical axiom—love—detached from a narrative context that supplies its meaning (and authority) is vulnerable to hijack from whatever narrative is defining "love" at any given time. Webster's commentary on Healy's work also notes one additional point of resonance worth considering. Webster addresses the "unsatisfactory" state of the church—a key critique of the dependency of Hauerwas's work on a well-functioning ecclesial community—by arguing that "the Church is not so much a cleanly separate society of well-formed persons as a messy set of unfinished and half-successful negotiations".[128] In this regard, the "messiness" of life which Fletcher's ethics labour to contend with is necessarily reflected in the imperfection of the church. In summary, Fletcher and Hauerwas have shared some common criticisms of Christian ethics as well as some common goals but have drawn some quite different conclusions.

4.3 Conclusion: The Deconstruction of "Mainstream" Christian Ethics and the Need for a Replacement

This chapter has analysed the multifaceted reasoning behind Hauerwas's rejection and critique of several "mainstream" Christian ethics traditions. This rejection included

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[125] Ibid.

[126] "Fletcher simply perpetuates this by replacing decisions based on abstract rules and laws with decisions based on the principle of love, which arguably devolves to mere consequentialism." Ibid.

[127] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 55. Evangelicals, such as Stanley Grenz, would not disagree with this assessment. Demonstrably he places great emphasis on the historical tradition of the church. See Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 18–19.

[128] Webster, "Ecclesiocentrism."

Kingdom ethics, which he believes, for the most part, polarises ethics to the earthly and otherworldly extremes. He likewise argues that biblical ethics sometimes attempts to assume authority by denying its embedding in a particular tradition, and that it is only so helpful in articulating specific views on biblical theology rather than on Scripture's ethical function. Natural law has also proven impotent to address moral fragmentation, the mission it was assigned, and additionally it dilutes and eclipses the power of narrative to the extent that the Christian story becomes superfluous. Divine command ethics, though faring better than biblical ethics (both literalism and generalism) and natural law, is equally unhelpful in Hauerwas's mind. The assumption that morality is grounded in God's character teleports the discussion into the philosophical and theological realms, ignoring the earthly realities of the moral life and distracting Christian ethics with shifting biblical interpretations and philosophical traditions. He appears apathetic towards rules, given that their utility and morality are entirely derivative of the narrative that gives them intelligibility and practicality, and although situation ethics might resonate with Hauerwas's acknowledgement of morality's "messiness", it gives too much power to "decision" ethics at the expense of the moral world in which the decision arises.

Hauerwas's goal regarding the ethical task summarises why he rejects many of these more established approaches: "Christian ethics, therefore, is not first of all concerned with 'Thou shalt' or 'Thou shalt not'. Its first task is to help us rightly envision the world. Christian ethics is specifically formed by a very definite story with determinative content".[129] He therefore rejects the pursuit of objectivity, along with any ethical framework that hinges on this promise and insists on "the qualifier 'Christian'".[130]

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[129] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 29.

[130] "In contrast to the universalizing tendency, [he argues] that Christian ethics reflect a particular people's history." Ibid., 17. The influence of MacIntyre emerges here, Larsen explains: "Universalism separates formal political reasoning from judgements about substantive moral conceptions of the good, which are deemed private and individual". Larsen, "How I Think Hauerwas Thinks," 24. Moral jugdgement are deferred to capitalist forces in this way when, as MacIntryre writes, "no overall [public] ordering of goods is possible" moral judgements. Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 337. The result, Larsen argues is "complete moral incoherence". Larsen, "How I Think Hauerwas Thinks," 24. As MacIntyre suggests, "To be outside of all traditions is to be

Of Hauerwas's view, Stout writes that "all standpoints are conditioned. No point of view can plausibly claim universality in the Kantian sense. That is why ethics always needs a qualifier".[131] This chapter has demonstrated that many moral frameworks miss the mark, in Hauerwas's mind, by blindly pursuing objectivity and/or circumventing the necessary envisioning of the world.

Regarding the former, Larsen describes how Hauerwas's discomfort with universalising epistemologies highlights some commonality with "subversive Christian ethics. Feminist, womanist, queer, black or postcolonial ethics begins epistemically by refusing deference to the dominant subject of universal rationality, just as Hauerwas refuses a politics that presumes a stable, universal subject of knowledge".[132] The way in which Hauerwas argues can lead one to assume that he dispenses with the idea that morality can have any objectivity.[133] Indeed, some of his harshest critics make this assumption about Hauerwas's position, but to do so here would be unfair. As mentioned earlier, he does allow for competition between narratives and in a sense submits Christian ethics to the "contest of ideas". This dialogue is demonstrated by the following argument:

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a stranger to enquiry; it is to be in a state of intellectual and moral destitution". MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 367.

[131] Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, 174.

[132] Larsen, "How I Think Hauerwas Thinks," 27.

[133] In chapters 12 and 13 of *Sanctify Them* Hauerwas addresses the idea of objectivity in a different way. He turns to education briefly, commenting on both the university system and schooling. His main contention is about how the term "objectivity" is used when discussing educational endeavours, particularly regarding treating sciences as objective and humanities as not. "In the name of objectivity the assumption has been underwritten that knowledge is only good in so far as that which is known is freed from any tradition of inquiry." Hauerwas, *Sanctify Them*, 235. While it remains true that sciences primarily engage with empirical data (Hauerwas is not in denial about that), he claims that "the sciences work well exactly because they exemplify a traditioned mode of inquiry, which, moreover, requires the student to be capable of participating in such a tradition". Ibid. He goes on to say: "If students are to become good scientists they must be willing to have their lives transformed through that activity; they must be transformed, moreover, not simply because of the current social power of science but because of its beauty". Ibid.

> Yet that does not mean Christian convictions are of significance only for the church, for Christians claim that by learning to find our lives within the story of God we learn to see the world truthfully. Christians must attempt to be nothing less than a people whose ethic shines as a beacon to others illumining how life should be lived well.[134]

Presumably the Christian vision of the world will provide moral material for the church community, including virtues and rules, but this outcome seems for Hauerwas to be secondary.[135] As Sterling has argued, "there are moral absolutes (deontological) that need to be established, but can only be properly determined by community".[136] To argue from a different perspective, ethics is historical, since Christians are a people with a history, and therefore Christian ethics is grounded in history. "We are unable to stand outside our histories in mid-air, as it were; we are destined to discover ourselves only within God's history".[137] This argument also forms the basis for Hauerwas's perspective on the Scriptures explored above. In the words of Healy, Hauerwas has "a strong tendency to construe Scripture ecclesiocentrically, as a test that has as its primary function the

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[134] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 34.

[135] "Furthermore, to be a Christian is not principally to obey certain commandments or rules, but to learn to grow into the story of Jesus as the form of God's kingdom." Ibid., 30. What will become apparent as we continue to explore Hauerwas's work is the way he seems to oscillate between speaking theologically and speaking homiletically. Indeed, one cannot understand Hauerwas in his full totality until his self-perception as both a member of the church and a member of the academy is delineated. For comments on this, see Charles Pinches, "Considering Stanley Hauerwas," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 40, no. 2 (2012): 199. All that to say, I am not sure that Hauerwas would be particularly happy with such a neat divide, but it might make him more relevant as we approach the dialogue between him and the ACC.

[136] Sterling, "Pentecostal Ethic." This is to be contrasted with "the royal consciousness"—a Brueggemann term for the ethical behaviour of the secular world. See Brueggemann, *Prophetic Imagination*, 21–38. Hauerwas would argue that the covert takeover of the church by liberalism has impeded its ability to be the prophetic community.

[137] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 29.

formation and maintenance of community identity and effective witness".[138] Community formation brings the discussion right back to narrative, and the particular story (or stories) in which we find ourselves. Any rules or virtues that subsequently emerge are a product of, rather than separate from, these narratives.

Before I address Hauerwas's constructive proposals specifically, I will make three critical points. Firstly, an overemphasis on rules creates a similar context to natural law, because, according to Hauerwas, any ethic that separates action from agent has the effect of "distorting our moral psychology".[139] Secondly, he is working against the grain of modern ethics, which "seeks a foundation for morality that will free moral judgments from their dependence on historically contingent communities".[140] And finally, the criticism of deontological ethics is not new, and is problematic especially for Christianity, which puts great emphasis on not just one's actions, but on one's motivation and the intentions behind them. An uncritical subscription to deontology leads to an equivalency of good ethics with "ability to follow commands".[141] In this regard, much of Hauerwas's critique seems to be justified and is influenced strongly by his dissatisfaction with the liberal theological tradition on the one hand, and the infiltration of secular thinking and assumptions on the other.

In conclusion, Hauerwas rejects much of "mainstream" Christian ethics on these general bases, which creates a methodological vacuum for him to fill with his constructive proposals. Moreover, I have identified some points of compatibility with pentecostals. These include dissatisfaction with the "mainstream", stylistic proclivities, contending with

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[138] Healy, *Hauerwas*, 57. As well as identifying Hauerwas's "reductive view" of the church, according to Webster, Healy is questioning the central doctrines and assumptions imbedded into Hauerwas's work. Webster, "Ecclesiocentrism."

[139] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 21.

[140] Ibid., 17.

[141] The other major challenge with divine command morality is summarised by Grenz as being a hermeneutical issue: "Whenever Christians eat pork (Lev 11:7–8), refrain from stoning sexual offenders (Deut 22:13–24) or no longer require women to wear veils when they pray (1 Cor 11:5, 13), they bear silent witness to the apparent inadequacy of a simple rule-book ethic. This phenomenon suggests that some deeper principle must be at work providing the criterion by means of which to differentiate between the universally applicable and the situationally conditioned laws of scripture". Grenz, *Moral Quest*, 244.

ethics experientially rather than abstractly, and engaging the theological task from the margins. I will now turn to Hauerwas's proposals that he argues, fill the methodological gaps, and provide a more authentically Christian and philosophically credible basis for ethics.

CHAPTER 5

STANLEY HAUERWAS'S ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL:

NARRATIVE AND VIRTUE IN THE CHURCH

5.1 Introduction: The Three Pillars of Stanley Hauerwas's Theological Ethics

Following on from chapter 4, this chapter will consider Hauerwas's theological ethics as an alternative to the approaches he has denounced. When setting out to become a Christian ethicist, Hauerwas recalls that "I had some sense that I was going to be an outlier. I thought the way you changed the world is by changing the world. You just have to provide an alternative".[1] While areas of resonance exist between pentecostalism and the Hauerwas worldview, insofar as what they critique and reject, Hauerwas's alternative needs to be considered in light of its possible synergy with pentecostal ethics and the particular tenets established in chapter 3. I will therefore evaluate Hauerwas's proposals, considering their strengths, weaknesses, critiques, and endorsements, and draw on scholars and critics to provide a comprehensive analysis of his arguments.

Hauerwas's areas of focus include narrative ethics, virtue ethics, and ecclesiology. These three pillars will be examined with a view toward illuminating a systematic approach that could both resonate with pentecostal ethics and yield a theological structure that clarifies pentecostal ethics in a methodological and systematic way.

5.2 Analysis of Hauerwas's Narrative Ethics

The analysis of Hauerwas's narrative ethics will be developed in the following way: firstly, I will summarise his primary claims and how he justifies narrative as a superior methodology. Secondly, I will note the challenges and problems that arise from his proposals. This section will conclude with a summary of Hauerwas's narrative ethics.

5.2.1 Introduction to Hauerwas and Narrative

Hauerwas's narrative ethics cannot be understood apart from its foundation in narrative theology. Along with coeditor L. Gregory Jones, Hauerwas published an apologetic of narrative theology in 1997 which claimed that the absence (or rejection) of narrative leads

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[1] Brock and Hauerwas, *Beginnings*, 20.

to a "distorted account of moral experience",[2] and therefore propagates an existential falsehood: "that judgments can be justified apart from the agent who finds himself or herself in the situation".[3] The traditional approaches described above were rejected by Hauerwas, in part, on this basis. In Hauerwas's mind, narrative ethics corrects this distortion, and he argues that in narrative theology:

1. Character and moral notions take on meaning only in a narrative.
2. Narrative and explanation stand in an intimate relationship.
3. The standard account of moral objectivity is the obverse of existentialist ethics.[4]

He employs the term "standard account" to refer to philosophical approaches to ethics which elevate objectivity as a critical dimension of ethical integrity—a helpful descriptor for some of the "mainstream" approaches he rejects. Hauerwas describes this orientation, regardless of the tradition (for example, Kantian or utilitarian), as the need to "free moral behaviour from the arbitrary and contingent nature of the agent's beliefs, dispositions, and character".[5] On consequentialism and utilitarianism, he chastises them

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[2] Stanley Hauerwas and David Burrell, "From System to Story: An Alternative Pattern for Rationality in Ethics," in *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 158.

[3] Ibid., 164.

[4] "Since the latter [standard account] assumes that the failure to secure moral objectivity implies that all moral judgements must be subjective or arbitrary […] By showing the way narrative can function as a form of rationality we hope to demonstrate that these represent false alternatives." Ibid., 159.

[5] Ibid., 160. The rejection of apparent "subjective" influences mimics the scientific endeavour and the Enlightenment focus on reason. Neil Ormerod briefly tackles a similar challenge, particularly the dialectic of faith and reason through the dual lenses of MacIntyre and Lonergan. "In particular Alasdair MacIntyre has argued against the Enlightenment pretensions of a universal reason—what he calls the 'encyclopedic tradition'—and for the notion of historically grounded reason, located in particular traditions of enquiry, summed up in the phrase, 'a tradition of rationality.'" Neil Ormerod, "Faith and Reason: Perspectives from Macintyre and Lonergan," *Heythrop Journal* 46, no. 1 (2005): 11. Furthermore, one might implement Ormerod's arguments by judging the quality of an ethic from within the marketplace of narratives, rather than the potential for the approach to be mechanistic and detached such as is epitomised in the "standard

as ethical approaches arising from a lack of conviction, calling them "bourgeois ethic[s] that asks how I can get through life with as little suffering as possible, given the fact that there is nothing that I deeply care about".[6] By rejecting the so-called "standard account" Hauerwas and his co-contributors suggest that ethics should distance itself from any "frameworks that give pride of place to the analysis of specific moral acts, 'quandaries' and individualized decisions concerning them".[7] To take for granted that ethical issues are nonconsequential until a moral quandary arises, is, according to Hauerwas, the central problem of contemporary ethics.[8] The major issue with "quandary ethics" is therefore the assumption that judgements can be justified by circumventing the moral actor and their respective narrative.

Stout defines quandary ethics as "an example capable of causing moral perplexity, a problematical case in search of a moral principle under which to be subsumed".[9] He writes that over time, quandary ethics tends "to distort our understanding of the moral life as a whole […] a succession of problems calling for decisions and thus to a view of the self as little more than a principled will".[10] Therefore, quandary ethics assumes that a "personal" position "can only be morally significant to the extent that it can be translated into the impersonal".[11] Reno clarifies this position by suggesting that morality for

account". For another summary of Hauerwas's position, see Thomas W. Ogletree, "Character and Narrative: Stanley Hauerwas' Studies of the Christian life," *Religious Studies Review* 6, no. 1 (1980): 27. Furthermore Healy summarises Hauerwas's position as follows: "Decision orientated ethics usually treats the moral agent as either a kind of Enlightenment reasoner, seeking the universal view from nowhere, or as an existentialist who must decide everything always anew if they are to be truly free […] All versions omit due considerations of the identity and experience of the person who makes the decision". Healy, *Hauerwas*, 26.

[6] Brock and Hauerwas, *Beginnings*, 49.

[7] William Werpehowski, "Talking the Walk and Walking the Talk," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 40, no. 2 (2012): 233.

[8] Hauerwas and Burrell, "System to Story," 163.

[9] Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, 141.

[10] Ibid., 142.

[11] Hauerwas and Burrell, "System to Story," 164. As Larsen explains, "It is nonsense to claim that two acts were identical except that one was good and the other was not, for a human act is never a merely physical

Hauerwas, when "[r]estricted to the 'vertical,' moral and religious life is so distant and ephemeral that it cannot exercise power in the world [... and therefore Hauerwas] wants us to use character, rather than command, as the 'central metaphor'".[12]

An example of quandary ethics in the broader ethics literature as well as in the Hauerwas corpus is abortion. To begin with the presumption that a difficult choice is a necessary precursor that triggers abortion ethics assumes that ethics is primarily all about hard decisions. To make this point explicit, Hauerwas points to the reality of shared language. Whether the moral agent is invoking a standard account of ethics or otherwise, language is a communal possession.[13] Just because language is not a solitary possession does not presuppose that meaning is uniform, however; variation in meaning is informed by a diverse pool of narratives. For example, Hauerwas suggests that even the term "abortion" can carry diverse meanings depending on the particular narrative being harnessed.[14] If the term "abortion" were to mean the same thing for all parties, then the assumption becomes that the disagreement is grounded on a basic moral principle. The point is that, as Larsen describes, "case studies start with a foundation, not in the middle. They presume a theoretical structure of obligation accessible to all right-thinking people and then derive judgements from that structure independently of the particularities and

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event that can be described apart from the agent's interpretation of the event". Larsen, "How I Think Hauerwas Thinks," 30.

[12] Reno, "Stanley Hauerwas," 305. Furthermore, as Stout describes, "each ethical theory offers evidence that its competitors are mistaken, yet each claims to have found universally acceptable principles [...] If such principles are there, they generate too much controversy among apparently rational people to do us much good". Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, 144–45.

[13] Larsen, in his paper on Hauerwas's thinking, uses a less cursory example of the function of shared language: "For example, the notion of 'table' makes sense because a shared rule determines what counts as a table. No number of material qualities or descriptions (colour, texture, appearance) constitute a description of a table apart from reference to the rule. Without a shared rule, a description lacks intelligibility". Larsen, "How I Think Hauerwas Thinks," 29; Hauerwas and Burrell, "System to Story," 168.

[14] "The standard account, for example, encourages us to assume that the 'pro' and 'anti-abortion' advocates mean the same thing by the word 'abortion.'" However, Hauerwas argues, "this kind of analysis fails to see that this issue is not one of principle or fact, but one of perception determined by a history of interpretation". Hauerwas and Burrell, "System to Story," 169.

contingencies of a tradition".[15] However, unlike the "standard account", narrative can illuminate abortion in a variety of ways previously impossible. These include but are not limited to "the stories we hold about the place of children in our lives, or the connection one deems ought or ought not to hold between sexuality and procreation".[16] This example demonstrates that, in Hauerwas's mind, narrative is both pre-eminent and formative when considering ethical issues. Werpehowski describes the function of narrative in ethics as follows:

> Who we are and what we responsibly make our own is constituted by choices, attitudes, responses, and actions arising from a character disposed to see the world in a particular way through narrative and narratives.[17]

Before this analysis turns to the challenges that emerge from employing narrative ethics, it is worth noting an observation that Hauerwas makes regarding moral narratives that are already integrated into the Christian tradition. These two particular "moral stories" represent the current narratives that inform the conservative and liberal rationalities, respectively.[18] Firstly, common among Protestants, the Bible provides "practical moral guidance designed to help believers conform more completely to their beliefs".[19] Secondly, there is what has become known as the social gospel movement, which focuses on "developing strategies for the realization of justice in the social realm".[20] Clearly employing either one of these narratives supplies a particular moral lens through which to view the world and to make moral judgements. Moreover, their application is relatively simple, given that both narratives undergird political traditions that had already been developing and therefore provide much of the landscape needed to understand them.

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[15] Larsen, "How I Think Hauerwas Thinks," 28.

[16] Hauerwas and Burrell, "System to Story," 169.

[17] Werpehowski, "Talking the Walk," 234.

[18] We explored some of these ideas in chapter 1 in light of the developing moral stories in early pentecostalism, the evangelical and holiness approaches, respectively.

[19] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 89.

[20] Ibid., 90.

While a Hauerwasian view of character formation will be explored in section 5.3 on virtue, he argues for its dependency on narrative. Character formation "is not an isolated event but requires the existence of a corresponding society—a 'storied society'"[21] that places narrative front and centre.[22] The problem with the conservative and liberal rationalities therefore is twofold. Firstly, neither rationality recognise the determinative nature of narrative, and instead prioritise principles and acts, both of which Hauerwas rejects. Beckley describes the argument as follows: "'Having character' is more fundamental than principles or acts because it enables us to understand principles and acts in the context of the on-going adventure of moral life"—narrative![23] In this regard, the unity and mutual necessity of both character and story are not sustained in the conservative or the liberal approach, and moreover, neither story is particularly compelling to converts.[24] Both narratives seem to render Hauerwas's work superfluous, or, as Hauerwas might prefer to argue, his work makes these narratives redundant![25]

5.2.2 Problems with Narrative Ethics

Having outlined the foundations of Hauerwas's narrative ethics, I will analyse his arguments further by considering challenges from other scholars as well as my own

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[21] Ibid., 91. The argument here is critical; the kind of moral training that Hauerwas is describing can occur only within a society. Some societies encourage particular actions and discourage others. The same virtues do not necessarily carry the same weight across all societies. Healy, *Hauerwas*, 27.

[22] Hence the argument that "environments" or "narratives" inform and mediate ethics that is explored by Hauerwas and Wells. "What has the altar to do with the lecture theater? The connection of the two may seem incongruous to many, absurd to some." Stanley Hauerwas and Samuel Wells, *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 4.

[23] Beckley, review of *A Community of Character*, 299.

[24] Unlike the society "shaped and informed by the truthful character of the God […] revealed in the stories of Israel and Jesus." Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 92.

[25] This is also why Healy avoids a purely methodological analysis of Hauerwas's work on narrative, as he interprets Hauerwas as being uninterested in such an approach, given it takes the focus away from the story of God. "[Hauerwas] tells us he has moved away from 'theoretical discussion of the nature of narrative qua narrative' because he has become 'increasingly convinced that such analysis does little to help us understand the story of God.'" Stanley Hauerwas, *Naming the Silences: God, Medicine, and the Problem of Suffering* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), xii. Quoted in Healy, *Hauerwas*, 17.

observations. These include narrative ethics' relationship with relativism, subjectivism, and postmodernism; narratives' failure to arbitrate between competing moralities; and the ambiguity of the relationship between narrative and its complementary scheme, virtue.

5.2.2.1 The Subjectivity of Narrative Ethics

Firstly, a possible opposition to narrative ethics includes its susceptibility to the pitfalls of relativism and postmodernism—one could argue for its rejection to mitigate the possibility of these charges. To use Reno's analogy, a "horizontal" ethic, such as narrative, would necessarily exclude moral ideals that are characterised by timelessness or transcendence—stabilising characteristics in some ethical systems. Many critics of narrative theology argue that losing the timeless nature of morality causes ethics to regress into a destructive subjectivism or relativism. Relativism maintains some appeal given its capacity to circumvent confrontation, avoid conflict, and leave others' moral universes intact.[26] Despite the palatability of this approach within the reality of political and religious pluralism, ethical relativism can be morally destructive. If everything is true, then truth is emptied of its meaning, and nothing is true. If nothing is true, ethically speaking, one is left with moral nihilism. Potential nihilism is what Hauerwas risks in his rejection of the "standard account". This challenge should not be underestimated, given the pluralistic reality within which the church exists, but to assume that the goal is to destroy relativism is, I think, not Hauerwasian, to the extent that relativism also opposes the supremacy of the "standard account". A Hauerwasian approach questions whether Christianity supplies the tools necessary to navigate relativism rather than simply to

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[26] While relativism negates and dismisses confrontation, it is almost a mechanism of avoidance. Hauerwas deviates from this approach by arguing that "the task of the Christian is not to defeat relativism by argument but to witness to a God who requires confrontation". This confrontation, he suggests, "sometimes take[s] the form of explicit argument, but the validity and power of such argument ultimately depends on the church being a society where people manifest the unity that can come only from worship of the true Lord of our existence". Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 105.

demand its defeat.[27] What is needed is "an interpretation of and the corresponding skills to live in a world where others exist who do not share my moral history".[28]

Connected to relativism is the fear that narrative renders ethics too individualistic and therefore vulnerable to subjectivity. On this charge, Hauerwas makes a paradoxical argument that, by retreating from narrative (for fear of subjectivity), one loses the ability to harness objectivity. He argues that "Ethical objectivity cannot be secured by retreating from narrative, but only by being anchored in those narratives that best direct us toward the good".[29] In other words, "[the] standard account [of ethics] obligates us to regard our life as an observer would. But paradoxically, what makes our projects valuable to us is that they are ours".[30] Good ethics, in his view, is treating the moral agent as the subject of the agent's own experiences, and not in disconnecting the agent to the point of becoming an aloof observer.[31] Only in a commitment to this kind of authenticity can true objectivity be realised in any given context. This achievement of course is also assuming that a narrative that "best directs us toward the good" is identified.

As an aside, those who criticise an "agent-centric" approach to ethics for fear of subjectivism and individualism need not be concerned by Hauerwas's model. A "history", as conceived by Hauerwas, is shared, not isolated, and necessarily involves a community of actors with a moral capacity. Therefore, Hauerwas's ethics is strongly anti-individualist, as one's given story involves a larger community, and the individual is accountable to both the community and the integrity of its shared narrative. This accountability is the opposite of the "liberalism" Hauerwas opposes, which encourages not just individualism, but the casting off of shared history to write one's own.

A related challenge is the charge that narrative ethics is postmodernism masquerading as a moral philosophy, particularly in the sense that postmodernism casts

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[27] "Not *proofs* to destroy relativism but *skills* to live in a divided world." Samuel Wells, *Transforming Fate into Destiny: The Theological Ethics of Stanley Hauerwas* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2004), 82.

[28] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 105.

[29] Hauerwas and Burrell, "System to Story," 162.

[30] Ibid., 171.

[31] In his analysis of Hauerwas's approach, Werpehowski observes that "[he] seems on course to realize that the self is a history—there is no freestanding self that can acquire one". Werpehowski, "Talking the Walk," 231.

suspicion on the inherent meaning of texts, language, and literature, and instead delegates the interpretive and epistemological authority squarely to the court of the interpreter.[32] It is surprising that Hauerwas is as generous toward postmodernism as he is. While both modernism and postmodernism are problematic, he argues that "For theologians to come to the defence of modernist conceptions of the self in the interest of securing moral objectivity and moral agency strikes me as a deep irony […] the creation of such a self was but part of the Enlightenment attempt to construe the world as intelligible without the need for the 'God hypothesis'".[33] For him, he simultaneously calls out the secular roots of the modernist paradigm while reminding his readers that "Postmodernism names the vulnerabilities built into this view of the self and knowledge that were present from its inception".[34]

It seems to be the case that he is more lenient toward postmodernism, not because he agrees with its presuppositions, but due to its ability to question the efficacy of human agency to master a knowledge of the world successfully. If agency is the fulcrum for ethical decision-making, rejecting agency in favour of a historically determinative form of moral life, postmodernism allows "accounts of the Christian moral life in terms of the virtues and character"[35] given postmodernism requires a view of the world that places doubt on the capability of humans to act in morally perfect ways. In this regard he seems to view postmodernism as a mechanism by which character development and pursuing virtue, rather than perfect decision-making or ethical knowledge, can be central to Christian moral life which is not to be confused with accepting postmodernism's philosophical tenets.

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[32] Grenz describes this relationship as part of post-structuralist thinking. Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 6. This view of knowledge is embedded in the broader postmodern philosophy of reality articulated by French philosopher Jacques Derrida, that there is nothing transcendent to what is experienced in time and space, making an individual the central broker of truth and meaning. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 50.

[33] Hauerwas, *Sanctify Them*, 104–5.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., 102–3.

Notwithstanding the pitfalls of moral relativism, subjectivism and postmodernism, there seems to be a way to reconcile these challenges against the Hauerwasian worldview. In particular, he continually refers to relativism as a necessary derivative of pluralism—the recognition of coexisting moral stories. This understanding is different from suggesting that relativism renders every moral tradition legitimate. Furthermore, Hauerwas never suggests that narrative, in the theological sense, fractionates to the level of the individual. Christian narrative is always communal, arising in the church, and therefore protects against narrative-derived moral subjectivism. If this interpretation is a more generous way to read Hauerwas, then his positions should not be dismissed based on a particular misreading or exaggeration of his arguments. Moreover, Hauerwas argues that the best arbiter of moral narratives are virtues, the kinds of people that the narrative produces, and a version of the "by their fruit you will recognise them" argument.[36] Wells identifies the limitations of this methodology: on this basis, many religions produce admirable fruit and thus are contenders for truthful narratives.[37] This observation is not made as an argument in favour of relativism, more so in favour of the further clarification required "if" virtues indeed signal the quality of a moral narrative.

This position, as well as establishing character as a "check" on the narrative, also delegitimises coercion in the name of morality, believing that "the truth 'will out'"[38]— foreshadowing Hauerwas's future emphasis on peace and nonviolence exemplified by the church. While it might sound convincing to allow "virtuous people" to supply credibility to their chosen story by letting the "virtues speak for themselves", there is much to explore regarding Hauerwas's virtue ethics later in this chapter.

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[36] This has similarities with Lonergan. "Genuine objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity." Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, ed. Robert M. Doran and John D. Dadosky (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 273. *Holy Bible.* New International Version, Study Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Matthew 7:20.

[37] Wells, *Transforming Fate into Destiny*, 80.

[38] Furthermore, Hauerwas makes the case that "the non-resistant character of Christian community, which is often sadly absent, is a crucial mark of the power of the Christian story to form a people in a manner appropriate to the character of God's providential rule of the world". Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 101.

5.2.2.2 The Efficacy of Narrative Ethics

Secondly, having addressed a central philosophical challenge to narrative ethics, I will now address a practical one. J. W. Robbins suggests that Hauerwas's proposals are, at worst, "morally bankrupt", arguing that a pure narrative theory of moral rationality demands the separation of moralities along narrative lines. Consequentially, even an "ideal Christian community [is] in no better position […] to deal with moral issues than are those purporting to represent, say, the ideal consensus of a universal rational community".[39] Hauerwas's propositions, in this regard, lack effectiveness and are unable to arbitrate between people of, to use Hauerwas's words, "different beliefs and customs just at a time when we confront problems where such discourse and actions are so much needed [and] encourage the attitude that every community—and worse, every individual—has their own story and there is no means for deciding that one story can be preferred to another".[40]

This challenge is related to the trifactor challenge of relativism, subjectivism, and postmodernism, but has a pure pragmatic orientation (how one might arbitrate between competing stories)—an essential question if one is to accept the moral authority of narratives. In addition to the question of virtue, while will be addressed in section 5.3 of this thesis, Julian Hartt considers the role of history in the authentication of narrative and suggests that the moral authority of a story or "strength[s] of the stor[ies]"[41] is limited and guided by several intersecting epistemological realities. "Story strength" carries a comprehensive meaning, not just one levied by its relatability or its compelling nature but by its historical actuality. For Hartt, theological stories that are grounded *in* history can elevate stories from the diverse pool of narratives given that history is by no means dependent on narrative and therefore precedes whatever story might be told.[42] There does seem to be at its root some significant disagreement between Hauerwas and Hartt, and the former concedes the strength of Hartt's argument in the following way: "Hartt is right to insist that the kind of story we find in the Gospels requires that certain facts be

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[39] J. Wesley Robbins, "Narrative, Morality and Religion," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 8, no. 1 (1980): 174.

[40] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 94.

[41] Julian Hartt, *Theological Method and Imagination* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2006), 254.

[42] Ibid.

true—that Jesus did call disciples, did get to Jerusalem, was tried, and that his body was missing from his tomb".[43] Hauerwas's position goes deeper than history, however. Sarisky explains that in Hauerwas's worldview, "there is nothing more basic or fundamental than scriptural stories to give an account of the sort of life God expects from his followers".[44] More specifically, Sarisky explores the nature of scriptural narratives in the Hauerwasian worldview:

> Narratives are not elementary modes of represented deeper truths about human nature […] inherently abstract and intelligible only to those capable of high-level thinking. […] Second, neither are narratives to be subsumed under the category of fiction: the biblical narratives provide a construal of reality, not a set of myths or fantasy tales. […] Third, neither are narratives subordinate to doctrinal concepts but rather vice versa. Doctrines are auxiliaries or tools that aid Christians in telling their stories.[45]

Hartt and Hauerwas seem to be in harmony with regard to the importance of historical testimony, but Hauerwas's only problem with Hartt's argument seems to be the assumption that "meaning" can be created from historical propositions isolated from the embedded nature of history in the context of narrative.[46] As Sarisky writes, "Hauerwas thinks reality exists as something determinate that can in principle be interpreted correctly, but he also thinks that the only way to understand reality is through narrative. His is therefore a complicated realism, one without the possibility of verification, since no perspective exists outside of the linguistic structure that narrative provides from which to compare brute reality with the biblical story".[47] Hauerwas concludes that narrative does

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[43] Stanley Hauerwas, "Why the Truth Demands Truthfulness: An Imperious Engagement with Hartt," in Hauerwas and Jones, *Why Narrative?*, 306.

[44] Sarisky, *Scriptural Interpretation*, 147.

[45] Ibid., 147–48.

[46] Hauerwas, "Why the Truth Demands Truthfulness," 307.

[47] Sarisky, *Scriptural Interpretation*, 146–47.

not make historical transactions irrelevant, but that "the emphasis on narrative is but the means to note the kind of actuality we believe has grasped us in Jesus of Nazareth".[48]

Returning to Robbins's criticism, that narrative ethics stifles moral dialogue, Hauerwas insists that this type of critique makes assumptions about the nature of narrative: that narrative performs an apologetic function rather than a theological one.[49] Furthermore, it is important that reasonable expectations be placed on Hauerwas's proposals. It is certainly true that if there is credibility to what Robbins et al. have argued, then narrative is not a particularly helpful contributor to moral dialogue. However, if the goal is reframed in terms of pitting "moral contrast" over "moral dialogue", then Hauerwas's proposals may be successful. Of course, it needs to be acknowledged that the abstraction Hauerwas vehemently opposes could easily occur when narrative is the only focus.[50] But he argues that one simply does not dismiss a proposition because it has been applied incorrectly in the past. In short, its misuse says nothing about its usefulness or, indeed, its truthfulness.[51]

5.2.2.3 The Coherency of Narrative Ethics: Narrative and Virtue

Thirdly, a methodological tension arises given the coexistence of narrative and virtue as symbiotic ethical frameworks in the Hauerwasian worldview. If it is to be accepted that virtues and narratives are necessarily co-dependent to circumvent possible pitfalls, then a more thorough explanation of the two's relationship needs to be articulated. This relationship is not merely reciprocal: it appears circular and confusing; and Hauerwas does not clearly state which of these comes first—the chicken or the egg.[52] Brian Brock describes this circularity as a challenge precisely because, sometimes, "we don't know

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[48] Hauerwas, "Why the Truth Demands Truthfulness," 308.

[49] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 95. See also Robbins, "Narrative, Morality and Religion," 174. Like Robbins, Longwood notes that narrative lacks the ability to facilitate "moral dialogue with persons in other traditions, religious or secular, concerning public policy issues". Longwood, review of *The Peaceable Kingdom*, 77.

[50] Reno, "Stanley Hauerwas," 308.

[51] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 94.

[52] See Hays, *Moral Vision of the New Testament*, 254–55.

what we are looking for". He writes that while "we can never avoid circular reference […] how do we nail down the primary referent?"[53]

A similar methodological problem arises regarding how the church interprets Scripture. For example, the church can read and receive Scripture truthfully only if it is already formed correctly by the New Testament's account of Jesus. Sarisky suggests that though Hauerwas's exact beliefs regarding the Bible's role in transformation are ambiguous, Hauerwas's preaching may demonstrate how he uses Scripture most clearly.[54] "For Hauerwas, proper scriptural interpretation has a Christological focus: the aim of reading is to recognize the risen Lord […] The problem is that recognizing the risen Lord is no simple matter".[55]

At this point it becomes unclear where exactly the inroad might be in order to establish whether it is possible for Christians to be transformed in the way Hauerwas presumably desires.[56] For example, he has made the case that the truthfulness of a narrative can be determined and judged, to a large extent, by the kinds of people (vis-a-vis virtues) that narrative produces.[57] To summarise in Sterling's terms, "ethics needs to be transformative in order for it to legitimize its existence".[58] Yet, Hauerwas simultaneously neglects to articulate the kinds of virtues that one should advocate. Moreover, he has also made the case that virtues can assume intelligibility only when considered within a narrative.

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[53] Brock and Hauerwas, *Beginnings*, 224. This discussion is embedded in a reflection of how L'Arche, communities of the mentally disabled, embodies identifiable virtues that assist the church to be the church and the need to be "precise" in that articulation—essentially, to get to the bottom of what is going on theologically. For a thorough exploration of L'Arche and virtue ethics see Jean Vanier and Stanley Hauerwas, *Living Gently in a Violent World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010).

[54] Sarisky, *Scriptural Interpretation*, 194.

[55] Ibid., 195. See also Stanley Hauerwas, *Unleashing the Scripture: Freeing the Bible from Captivity to America* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1993), 56.

[56] For example, any reading of Scripture, however earnest, seems to be, often, an exercise in futility, unless one stumbles across the perfect church presupposing the truthful reading of Scripture. See Hays, *Moral Vision of the New Testament*, 254–55.

[57] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 95. See also Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, 150.

[58] Sterling, "Pentecostal Ethic."

To make this point explicit Hauerwas contends that "justice is always someone's justice and benevolence someone's benevolence; indeed, the very distinction between justice and benevolence turns out to be relative to the self-understanding of historic communities".[59] Larsen illuminates the narrative function further by suggesting that "analysing a practical syllogism prospectively neglects a particular agent's contingency in the analysis of an act. […] Conceptually abstracting love and justice and then 'applying' duties to case studies without considering character is like expecting someone to produce a piece of music apart from training her to become a reliable music-producer".[60] The narrative "check" on character is what Hauerwas employs as "casuistry" in his ethics. While Hunsicker describes casuistry, at its basic level, as the "case-by-case application of general ethical principles",[61] Hauerwas invokes casuistry's function beyond adjudication within a moral system—"the process by which a tradition tests whether its practices are consistent".[62]

A point of clarification is needed here. There are many "virtues" that claim to be ahistorical, such as the moral trends of secular humanism. These orientations, including justice, fairness, and tolerance, are nonetheless highly historical, and therefore cannot be claimed as ahistorical.[63] Doerksen explains that tolerance as a "natural virtue" "is an integral part of justice; one that presumably has its own history that is separate from those noxious liberal versions of tolerance wherein tolerance is manifested as a vice".[64] Indeed Hauerwas suggests that they "become self-deceptive insofar as they pretend to be ahistorical".[65] A history, or narrative, therefore not only clarifies the meaning but

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[59] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 100.

[60] Larsen, "How I Think Hauerwas Thinks," 28.

[61] Hunsicker and Hauerwas, *Making of Stanley Hauerwas*, 24.

[62] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 120.

[63] Doerksen argues that the liberal account of tolerance is false. "Tolerance is not a 'blithe indifference that quickly melts into vile acceptance,' an understanding that is really only 'traitorous moral flabbiness,' a vice in disguise." Paul G. Doerksen, "The Politics of Moral Patience," *Political Theology* 15, no. 5 (2014): 455.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 94. Elsewhere he argues that "the current emphasis on justice and rights as the primary norms guiding the social witness of Christians is in fact a mistake". Stanley Hauerwas,

establishes parameters able to prevent excesses and deficiencies of particular dispositions. Beyond that, his casuistry demands that the community in which the narrative is taking place "adjudicate" the virtue, in line with its own understanding of the narrative.

At this point it still appears that in the Hauerwasian moral landscape virtues are dependent on narratives for their understanding, and narratives are dependent on virtues for their legitimacy. A potential way through the impasse can be found in *The Peaceable Kingdom*, where he articulates a further argument that, because Christian ethics is contingent on pre-existing antecedents such as narratives, one must begin engaging "in situ" rather than in a vacuum attempting to moralise *ex nihilo*.[66] Maybe imposing this logic misappropriates what Hauerwas is trying to do, but he has already rejected many mainstream ethical approaches, and in my view, Hauerwas's critique stands. Further he reiterates: "There is no point outside the history where we can secure a place to anchor our moral convictions. We must begin in the middle, that is, we must begin within a narrative".[67]

Another possible way to navigate the relationship between virtues and narratives is to establish the existence of a belief system (or metanarrative) that can mediate the narrative diversity. However, at no point in Hauerwas's work does he suggest that there is a governing metanarrative in the sense of a theological litmus test.[68] He states that "there is no story of stories, i.e., an account that is literal and that thus provides a criterion to say which stories are true or false. All we do is compare stories to see what they ask of us and the world we inhabit".[69] The closest he gets to endorsing a metanarrative is

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After Christendom: How the Church Is to Behave If Freedom, Justice, and a Christian Nation Are Bad Ideas (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2011), 46.

[66] "[I]n a sense one can ask about the task of Christian ethics only after it has begun." Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 50.

[67] Ibid., 62.

[68] Atsuyoshi Fujiwara, *Theology of Culture in a Japanese Context: A Believers' Church Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012), 72.

[69] Stanley Hauerwas, Richard Bondi, and David B. Burrell, *Truthfulness and Tragedy: Further Investigations in Christian Ethics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), 78–79. However, Wells suggests that the explicit rejection of metanarrative and apparent simplicity of "compare stories" and "see

through statements that insist theological ethics begins "with God's choice of Israel and the life of Jesus"[70] woven in and amongst his assertions that "the Christian story is a true story".[71] Beyond this 'general endorsement' of the Christian Story, he only provides guidelines "to discern" stories, rather than stipulations. For instance, does the story provide: "(1) power to release us from destructive alternatives; (2) ways of seeing through current distortions; (3) room to keep us from having to resort to violence; [and] (4) a sense for the tragic: how meaning transcends power."[72]

Hauerwas also avoids the term "metanarrative" for philosophical reasons, given that it can often function apologetically or imperiously, clarifying that "to say the gospel is metanarrative can suggest that the gospel occupies an epistemological space that assumes superiority over all other narratives. Such a presumption betrays the content of the gospel".[73] He recognises that "virtues and principles are going to be hanging around, whether they are made articulate or not. But clearly it's not just a narrative but the narrative that's going to make a difference".[74]

Hauerwas's problem with authority and metanarrative is summarised by Stout, who highlights that in the Hauerwas worldview "democratic story-swapping seem[s] useless, unless everyone agrees in advance on a canon" as a reference point.[75]

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what they ask of us" is characteristic of Hauerwas's earlier work. His later work, in contrast, provides more clarity on how simply observing for the appearance of good deeds, character traits, etc. does not always demonstrate the axiomatic goodness of a narrative. This is, according to Wells, due to a clearer alignment of the appearance of virtue with a true teleology, directed toward an ultimate good—such as the church. Wells, *Transforming Fate into Destiny*, 81. See Hauerwas, *Character and the Christian Life*, xxiii.

[70] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, xviii.

[71] Fujiwara, *Theology of Culture*, 73. While there exists no 'litmus test' in Hauerwas's work, any guidelines he provides are a way of, as Fujiwara describes, "seek[ing] objectivity within a nonfoundational approach". Atsuyoshi Fujiwara, "Narrative Approach in Stanley Hauerwas' Theology," *Christ and the World* 14 (2004): 122.

[72] Hauerwas, Bondi, Burrell, *Truthfulness and Tragedy*, 35. Quoted in Fujiwara, *Theology of Culture*, 73.

[73] "That the gospel just is this particular story of Jesus, the Son of God, known through cross and resurrection." Stanley Hauerwas and Romand Coles, *Christianity, Democracy, and the Radical Ordinary: Conversations between a Radical Democrat and a Christian* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010), 341.

[74] Brock and Hauerwas, *Beginnings*, 145.

[75] "a framework for discussion." Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, 178.

Furthermore, Wells argues that without a community, "the idea of a canon of Scripture" or indeed of anything "makes no sense. For a canon is the collection of texts that a people have come to regard as authoritative".[76] While this might seem contradictory for an approach which locates authority "within" rather than "external to" a narrative, it underscores the reality that ethical discourse absent of a "canon" is an exercise in futility. The critical difference is that fundamentals are embedded within the community, rather than imposed from without. For Hauerwas, his "canon", or, more accurately, the authorities accepted by the church as a narrative community, is "the community of Christian virtue, with its biblical metanarrative and its canon of classic lives".[77] In other words, while the "Christian moral canon" has origins in the Scriptures, given that "God chooses to reveal himself through the story of Israel, Jesus and subsequently the Church", it has continuity in the unfolding life of the church.[78]

In Ogletree's view, a clearer delineation between the type of story being told, such as metanarrative (epistemological and/or theological) versus other types of stories, might help strengthen Hauerwas's work overall.[79] This uncertainty also might explain why Hauerwas's tackling of very particular issues is so effective and persuasive, but it occurs despite the overarching integrity of his methodology and its perceived shortcomings. Without such a "birds-eye view" we are still faced with the problem of determining the virtues and, subsequently, no way to assess the quality of the narratives in question.

It is tempting to try to solve some of these challenges by turning back to the Scriptures to locate the virtues by which narratives can be measured. While Hauerwas does not do this explicitly, if the Bible provides material establishing "quality virtues", one may find a mechanism to govern Hauerwas's "beginning in the middle" proposal but do so by reverting to a form of biblical ethics. Unfortunately, biblical ethics does not adequately resolve the issues, as he has spent much of his work criticising its popular

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[76] Wells, *Transforming Fate into Destiny*, 74.

[77] Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, 178. Given that Hauerwas asserts that there is no metanarrative— "story of stories"—or at least that he is uncomfortable with the term, we must deduce that Stout is using the term differently from Hauerwas here, in a theological, rather than an apologetic or epistemological, sense.

[78] Wells, *Transforming Fate into Destiny*, 79.

[79] Ogletree, "Character and Narrative," 29.

methods, primarily because the historical "intent of ethical theory, at least since Kant, [has been] to free morality from historic communities and traditions" in pursuit of objectivity.[80] What is required is deeper examination of Hauerwas's virtue ethics.

5.2.3 Conclusion: Narrative Is the Communal Grounding of the Pursuit of Virtue

This section has presented Hauerwas's narrative ethics and outlined the primary challenges that arise from this analysis. These have included the philosophical, practical, and methodological problems. While narrative ethics is fallible, there are reasonable ways to navigate what has been identified, and given the reciprocity of virtue with narrative, Hauerwasian virtue ethics will be analysed further in the next section.

While I have evaluated some noteworthy critiques of narrative ethics, this discussion is probably as nuanced as needed for this thesis, insofar as it evaluates how narrative resolves some of the problems Hauerwas identifies in "mainstream" approaches. To conclude this section, Hauerwas again highlights the communal and temporal origin of narrative:

> Indeed, our very notion of "self" only makes sense as part of a more determinative narrative. We can only make sense of our lives, to the extent that we can make sense of our lives at all, by telling stories about our lives. To be able to "make sense of our lives" is primarily an exercise […] of retrospective judgement. Such judgements are by necessity under constant negotiation just to the extent we must live prospectively, with a view of the future. We are able to go forward just to the extent we can look back.[81]

This reality pressures ethicists to not simply declare morality as if it were coming from within a vacuum, or imposed from above, but to recognise its narrative origin and ensure that "story" is articulated as part of a defence of ethical positions. One of the ways Hauerwas suggests narratives be subject to scrutiny is assessing the virtues and characters

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[80] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 97.

[81] Hauerwas, *Sanctify Them*, 108.

produced as a consequence. He argues that "[t]he necessary interrelation of narrative and character provides the means to test the truthfulness of narratives. Significant narratives produce significant and various characters necessary for the understanding and richness of the story itself".[82] In order to explore character formation further, I will turn to a more focused discussion of the place of virtue in moral discourse as part of his solution to the problems with the "standard account".[83]

5.3 Analysis of Hauerwas's Virtue Ethics

The second dimension to Stanley Hauerwas's theological ethics is virtue, or "character". He defines virtue ethics as follows: "An ethic of virtue centres on the claim that an agent's being is prior to doing. Not that what we do is unimportant or even secondary, but rather that what one does or does not do is dependent on possessing a 'Self' sufficient to take personal responsibility for one's action".[84] The following paragraphs consider the origin of virtue, the community of virtue, and "peace"—a central virtue that permeates his corpus. This will be followed by a discussion of the challenges and a recapitulation of the discourse considering the relationship between the two dimensions of his work: narrative and virtue.

5.3.1 The Origin of Virtue: Jesus

For Hauerwas, the origin and source of the virtues is Jesus Christ.[85] Theologically speaking, this includes Jesus' incarnation, life and ministry, and resurrection. While some iterations

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[82] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 95.

[83] Reno summarizes these problems including a suggestion that "concerns about righteousness through works and the desire to secure a narrow zone of freedom have encouraged a disembodied and atomistic view of the self". Reno explores this regression through the lenses of Pietism's inward focus, divine intervention as figurative hand grenades, Kantian morality's fixation on pure motive, and utilitarianism's propensity for allusive and impersonal treatments of harms. Reno, "Stanley Hauerwas," 305. For my own summary of Hauerwas's problems with the "standard account", see section 5.2.1 of this thesis.

[84] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 113.

[85] Hauerwas prefaces this shift by suggesting that the distinctive of Christian ethics "is not our methodology, but the content of our convictions" (Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 69)—or, in Aristotelian terms, the person in whom the convictions reside. See Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins, *Aristotle's*

of Christian ethics give minimal bandwidth to the virtues, virtue ethics is central to Hauerwas's approach.[86] Like Aristotle, he argues that "No one can become virtuous merely by doing what virtuous people do. We can only be virtuous by doing what virtuous people do in the manner that they do it".[87] In this regard the entire life of Jesus, beginning with the incarnation,[88] becomes crucial to understanding the embodiment of virtues without capitulating to the idea that one must learn to "imitate God" or "be Jesus".[89] To emphasise the incarnation with respect to Jesus' birth, Hauerwas argues, is also to miss the ethical significance. "[The incarnation] is a reminder that we cannot assess God's claim of Jesus' significance short of seeing how his whole life manifests God's kingdom."[90] In other words, the incarnation is about learning to be Jesus followers by embodying the virtues necessary to sustain a Christian way of life.[91] Hauerwas is not dismissing the resurrection as insignificant; indeed, he argues: "Without the resurrection our concentration on Jesus would be idolatry, but without Jesus' life we would not know what

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Nicomachean Ethics (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2012). Regarding principles, virtues, and the like, Hauerwas suspects that "Christian ethics as such is not in principle methodologically different from other ethics". Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 69. A similar approach would resonate with pentecostals: "To be a Christian, it has been assumed, is to lead a certain kind of life. Another way of phrasing the matter is that Christian existence pivots on both an encounter with the triune God and a calling to follow this God". Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics*, 64.

[86] And Castelo reasons why this might be so: "Despite this longstanding tradition within Christian reflection, Pentecostals have rarely engaged virtue theory. This difficulty, perhaps, stems from the way that virtue theory promotes a certain kind of activism that is stereotyped as strategies toward 'self-improvement.' This caricature, however, fails to recognize the embedded nature of human living". Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics*, 65.

[87] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 76. See also Bartlett and Collins, *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, 31.

[88] The theological underpinning of the incarnation that is often lost, amid the emphasis on salvation, death, and resurrection, is Jesus as "the teacher of righteousness". Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 72. Sedgwick however argues that identifying the cross with nonviolence, as Hauerwas routinely does, conflates religion and morality in a way that is potentially theologically dubious. Timothy F. Sedgwick, review of *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics*, by Stanley Hauerwas, *Anglican Theological Review* 67, no. 2 (1985): 206.

[89] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 76.

[90] Ibid., 75.

[91] Ibid., 74.

kind of God it is who has raised him from the dead".[92] As an aside, this argument is an example of Hauerwas's articulating a systematic-sounding theology with respect to his ethics. While it might not satisfy some of the criticism levelled by Healy and others, it mitigates the idea that Hauerwas avoids theological discussion in his ethics altogether.[93]

Sedgewick questions "whether [identifying with the redemption narrative] alone is an adequate acknowledgment and response to God".[94] For what good is it to know the "kind of life" Jesus lived without some sense of obligation to embody this life as his people? Pentecostal theologian Dhan Prakash highlights the significance of the incarnation in a similar way: "If by his incarnation, God the creator of everything, including man, was willing to get his hands dirty by involving himself in human history and problems in the world, then the church as the body of Christ has no other option but to follow the example of Christ".[95] In other words, a myopic focus on "being" at the expense of embodiment through action seems to miss the totalising obligations of a "Christlike" life. Though Prakash focuses on social justice, his proposals are not mutually exclusive to Hauerwas's emphasis on embodied virtue.[96] Indeed Healy writes that "the new life of each individual springs from that of the community, while the life of the community springs from no other individual life than that of the Redeemer".[97]

Understanding Jesus' life in terms of lived virtue allows the conversation to move beyond Christology and into the realm of ecclesiology—the relationship between

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[92] Ibid., 79.

[93] Healy still prioritises doctrine, however, and though he celebrates Hauerwas's social ethics as "splendid" he maintains Hauerwas's doctrine as "surprisingly thin". Healy, *Hauerwas*, 102.

[94] Sedgwick, review of *The Peaceable Kingdom*, 206.

[95] Prakash, "Toward a Theology of Social Concern," 78.

[96] Off the back of Jesus' approach to the implementation of the kingdom, that of voluntary suffering and nonviolence, the thrust of Hauerwas's argument is captured by his assertion that "the Christian life" "is fundamentally a social life. We are 'in Christ' insofar as we are part of that community pledged to be faithful to this life as the initiator of the kingdom of peace." Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 93. Another related issue is how Hauerwas conceives of Jesus' teaching on the kingdom of God. In this regard his crucial point is not what the kingdom will "look like" per se, but how the sovereignty of God would manifest itself. Ibid., 83.

[97] Healy, *Hauerwas*, 46. See also Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1976), 525.

character and the people of God. The ecclesiological discussion also informs Hauerwas's understanding of church–state relationship—how the church interfaces with the world. The latter will be discussed in section 5.4, but initially we will explore how Hauerwas sees the practice of virtues emerge in the church.

5.3.2 The Community of Virtue: The Church

Having identified the source of Christian virtue in Jesus, Hauerwas clarifies how and where "character" emerges. He identifies the church as both the vehicle through which the virtues emerge in practice, and the community responsible for teaching "character". Given the centrality of the church in these arguments, Hauerwas consistently argues for a church community faithful to its calling to embody a unique vision of the world that can compete with the secular-liberal ideology described earlier. Sarisky summarises the point succinctly: "Hauerwas is especially concerned that modern thought, and not least modern views about human beings, conceals its influence, rendering people unaware of its hold over them".[98] Stout describes Hauerwas's method of persuasion "to preach the gospel and to conduct oneself in a way consistent with the gospel, so that people can see what the Christian way of life looks like […] providing a foretaste of the peaceable kingdom in which God reigns absolutely and eternally".[99]

Hauerwas's ecclesiology is elucidated later in this chapter, but, in the same vein as Stout, Werpehowski suggests that: "If the church is to be and to manifest itself as a community of peace, the distinctively Hauerwasian point follows":[100]

> Put starkly, the first social ethical task of the church is to be the church—
> the servant community. Such a claim may well sound self-serving until we
> remember that what makes the church the church is its faithful

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[98] Sarisky, *Scriptural Interpretation*, 142.

[99] Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, 145.

[100] Werpehowski, "Talking the Walk," 238.

manifestation of the peaceable kingdom in the world. As such the church

does not have a social ethic; the church is a social ethic.[101]

While Jesus preached the kingdom of God and charged the church to make it manifest, Hauerwas clarifies that the church "is not the kingdom but the foretaste of the kingdom. For it is in the church that the narrative of God is lived in a way that makes the kingdom visible. The church must be the clear manifestation of a people who have learned to be at peace with themselves, one another, the stranger, and of course, most of all, with God".[102] As such, the church's social ethic is most clearly experienced when its members embody Jesus' character.

While some may critique Hauerwas's assertion as ambiguous and lacking specificity, it challenges a common structural assumption about Christian ethics. His position demands that ethics not be divided into the binary categories of personal and social. His argument is that issues of "individual morality" are "communal", and issues of "social morality" are "personal". He writes that "the notion that one can distinguish between personal and social ethics distorts the nature of Christian convictions, for Christians refuse to admit that 'personal' morality is less a community concern than questions of justice, etc. 'Personal' issues may, of course, present different kinds of concern to the community than does justice, but they are no less social for being personal".[103]

Finally, while not articulating specifics, he exhorts the church to be a community of nonviolence. Embodying peace is foundational for Hauerwas and additionally provides a moral cornerstone by which the church can extrapolate ethical positions in an attempt to personify the kingdom more truthfully. What requires further exploration is the charge

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[101] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 99. Again, Castelo argues for some congruence: "With such integration being vital to Pentecostal identity, the question of ethics then is not simply an add-on to a catalogue of theological modes of inquiry; rather, theological ethics is very much at the heart of Pentecostal life precisely because of their emphases upon embodiment and performance. To modify Stanley Hauerwas's famous phrasing of the church more broadly, Pentecostals traditionally have not had a social ethic; rather, they have been one". Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics*, 22.

[102] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 97.

[103] Ibid., 96.

that the church rarely, if ever, satisfies this ideal and whether this failure is due to the weakness of the church or to the overpowering strength of liberalism to undermine the church's self-understanding. On the latter, Stout notes that Hauerwas is not alone in his criticism of democratic individualism's propensity to undermine the fabric of "tradition and community within which alone it is possible to nurture the virtues that sustain moral education and political life".[104] Of the power of liberalism, Larsen writes that "the modern, liberal moral framework (ironically) constitutes one among many particular, contingent and local moral traditions".[105] That has, of course, Hauerwas contends, broad sweeping reach in contemporary Christian ethics and has rooted itself deep within the thinking of the church.

Hauerwas's conception of the church and his somewhat idealistic vision is addressed more fully in section 5.4 on his ecclesiology. Before outlining the challenges with his virtue ethics more generally, I will explore peace as the virtue that characterises the majority of Hauerwas's work on ethical issues.

5.3.3 The Expression of Virtue: Peace

In Hauerwas's mind, the Christian community is the only group who can identify and practise peace correctly. Moreover, Christian ethics, and more specifically virtues, can be judged by its ability to embody and promote peace.[106] Those who are inherently nonviolent and therefore faithful to the challenge of this particular virtue "do not have to choose to use or not to use violence".[107] Peace is exemplified in the cross—the martyr's response to violence, best summarised by John Howard Yoder:

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[104] Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, 24–25. Both MacIntyre and Milbank also share Stout's concerns. Ibid.

[105] Larsen, "How I Think Hauerwas Thinks," 24. See also MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 119.

[106] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 99.

[107] Ibid., 125. Smith makes a similar charge to pentecostals: "Pentecostal spirituality is enlivened by a vision of a coming kingdom that imagines the world otherwise—a world no longer plagued by racism or disease or poverty". Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 84. More explicitly, Alexander, upon reading Hauerwas and Yoder, became more convinced that the early pentecostal positions on peace and justice were correct. Alexander, "Christ at the Checkpoint," 62.

Christians have held that the death of a Christian believer, as a result of his behaving in a Christian way at the hand of the agents of evil, can become through no merit of his or her own a special witness and a monument of the power of God. The death of that Christian disciple makes a greater contribution to the cause of God and to the welfare of the world than his staying alive at the cost of killing would have done. Forever after it is looked on with respect. Why not accept suffering? Jesus did.[108]

While Hauerwas does not reckon with Yoder's martyrdom argument specifically, it is important to clarify that he is not just referring to peacekeeping and pacifism in the classic sense, but is making a broader demand of all Christians—that they "use their imaginations to form their whole way of life consistent with their convictions".[109] He applies this guiding principle across the breadth of his ethics, arguing that "imagination is at the heart of casuistry".[110]

Regarding his pacifist positions, Hauerwas avoids the crossfire of characteristic discussions such as war and terrorism, and is deeply critical of churches that support, at

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[108] John Howard Yoder, "What Would You Do If? An Exercise in Situation Ethics," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 2, no. 2 (Fall 1974): 90.

[109] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 125. Reframing "peace" in this way does not necessarily render distinctions between certain types of violence irrelevant. On the contrary, I explore later how the ordering of intentions might function to distinguish similar acts such as violence in the context of self-defence is distinct from violence out of anger.

[110] Brock and Hauerwas, *Beginnings*, 136. It is worth noting that Hauerwas, again, is employing a very specific view of casuistry, one not necessarily shared across the ethics guild. Brian Brock flags this deviation, suggesting to Hauerwas that "The way you end the chapter on casuistry in The Peaceable Kingdom seems to me to solidify my claim that you are in fact blowing up the language of casuistry […] what you call casuistry is something totally different than the activity everybody else means by casuistry". Ibid., 140. For example, Kenneth Kirk writes that "Casuistry […] is a process of reasoning that focuses upon specific cases or moral problems, as opposed to a general study of ethical theories or concepts". Kenneth E. Kirk, *Conscience and Its Problems: An Introduction to Casuistry* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1999), xiii.

least in theory, the idea of just war, labelling them "Constantinian".[111] Stout's summary of Hauerwas is pointed, suggesting that:

> Christians stopped caring enough about the implications of their own master narrative […] What God does in response to the evils of the age is to suffer non-violently on the cross in perfect virtue. […] Christians abandoned the ethos of the early church precisely when they started trying to rule society lovingly. All they were really doing when they did that was to place a veneer of love-talk over the realities of imperial violence. Christians who concern themselves nowadays mainly with the struggle for justice are simply the democratic descendants of Constantine. They are busy basting the rotten carcass of governmental violence with holy water, but succeed in changing neither the taste nor the smell of the thing.[112]

Nevertheless, Hauerwas is known for particulars within his pacifist position. For example, it is likely that many in the west instinctively perceive the events of September 11 through the lens of terrorism. Hauerwas explains that "people say that September 11 forever changed the world. That is false. The year 33 A.D. forever changed the world. September 11 is just one other terrible event in the world's continuing rejection of the peace God made present through the Resurrection".[113] To think of 9/11 as the pivotal event that re-orientated the world is to relocate the resurrection to the peripheries and demotes Christian ethics to a form of crisis management. To establish the resurrection as the central transformative event in history subordinates 9/11 as a poor response to the resurrection. The former allows the world to dictate the terms of Christian ethics and is therefore a "Constantinian" response. The latter separates the church from the world, to

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[111] Healy, *Hauerwas*, 62–63. For a thorough exploration of militarism, violence and war in the American context see Stanley Hauerwas, *War and the American Difference: Theological Reflections on Violence and National Identity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011).

[112] Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, 152.

[113] Stanley Hauerwas, "Faith Fires Back," *Duke Magazine*, Duke Divinity School, January 31, 2002, 12, http://dukemagazine.duke.edu/article/faith-fires-back.

institute its own rules of engagement and is, therefore, a "kingdom" response.[114] Larsen summarises how Hauerwas's pacifism is differentiated from alternative pacifist proposals: "Pacifism is therefore not a moral commitment meant to make the world 'a better place' (as if some universally knowable outcome could justify any means of getting there), but a response to the truth of God's non-violent rule from the cross".[115] By reading the Gospels the way Hauerwas does, Werpehowski describes how, by highlighting "Jesus' political act of refusing recourse to violence, Hauerwas is able to believe that pacifism is the normative mode of witness to God's reign in history".[116]

Stout also highlights a problem with Hauerwas's presentation of pacifism, calling it a "quixotic gesture" rather than a "demanding doctrine", given that Hauerwas's ethical positions seem to demand very little from their followers.[117] For example, Stout notes that not only is conscription a retired practice in the United States, but Hauerwas does not advocate the withholding of tax, given the military industrial complex, nor the barring of soldiers from taking communion.[118] All of this to say Hauerwasian pacifism seems to lack the teeth to promote its efficacy. Perhaps its strength is more rhetorical and grounded in its opposition to popular positions arising from culturally significant tragedies like 9/11. To take a pacifist position in the face of the broad political and cultural consensus is where such a position can embody the powerful prophetic ethics that Hauerwas would support.

In conclusion, Hauerwas does not elucidate a mainstream position. Indeed, a plethora of responses to events such as 9/11 demonstrate that many who purport

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[114] "Does the position I have tried to sketch in this paper mean Christians must finally accept the inevitability of war and, perhaps even, our inability to distinguish war from terrorism? I certainly see no reason why such a conclusion must follow from what I have said. Christian witness is an alternative to war just to the extent Christian witness establishes connections between those who have no reason to be connected. Such connections in themselves cannot ensure peace because, contrary to liberal sentimentality that assumes if people only come to know one another better violence is less likely, the exact opposite may be the case." Hauerwas, *Sanctify Them*, 202–3.

[115] Larsen, "How I Think Hauerwas Thinks," 34.

[116] William Werpehowski, *American Protestant Ethics and the Legacy of H. Richard Niebuhr* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 6.

[117] Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, 158.

[118] Ibid.

Christianity nevertheless attract the "Constantinian" critique. To explain this reality, and considering his argument regarding a narrative-informed community (or indeed a community-informed narrative!), he suggests that classic pacifist Scriptures, such as the Sermon on the Mount, can be read correctly only by a community with the right set of narrative presuppositions. As an aside, this co-dependence captures the inherent circularity of his position mentioned earlier. "[T]he Sermon on the Mount presupposes the existence of a community constituted by the practice of nonviolence, and it is unintelligible divorced from such a community."[119] One must wonder whether Hauerwas's church experience has informed this position on pacifism in such a way that he, along with very few others, possesses the narrative coherence that enables a correct reading of the Sermon on the Mount.

The radical nature of Christianity with respect to this discussion is the following: "Christians have been sent out into a world of war to challenge the necessity of war armed only with weapons of love. Put differently, that Christians are first and foremost called to be witnesses by necessity creates epistemological crises for those who do not worship the God of Jesus Christ".[120] Hauerwas also accepts the possibility that this "epistemological crisis" would affect those who follow Jesus, but additionally those who believe war to be a moral option; indeed, he welcomes the crisis to impact them too. Returning to the earlier example of terrorism, what is imperative regarding 9/11 is that the way "Christians narrate this event will be different than how other people narrate this event",[121] *and* "the narrative connections Christian witness makes possible, believing—as we do—that the story of Christ is the end of all stories".[122]

5.3.4 Challenges with Hauerwas's Virtue Ethics

While there are some compelling arguments in Hauerwas's virtue ethics, there are some challenges and clarifications worth noting. The following paragraphs will outline these issues and include, firstly, how one practically pursues character formation, and secondly,

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[119] Hauerwas, *Unleashing the Scripture*, 64.

[120] Hauerwas, *Sanctify Them*, 201.

[121] Hauerwas, "Faith Fires Back," 12.

[122] Hauerwas, *Sanctify Them*, 203.

the relationship between duty and virtue. Thirdly, I will address the criticism that Hauerwas's arguments appear to lack theological strength, before finally revisiting the connection between narrative and virtue in Hauerwas's broader ethical methodology.

5.3.4.1 How One "Forms" Character

Firstly, I will address the pragmatic questions that arise assuming that Hauerwas's general approach to virtue is accepted. Given the emphasis he places on character formation, there is surprisingly little direction pertaining to how one might pursue it. However convincing he might be on specific ethical issues, general directives pertaining to the cultivation of virtues appear to be lacking. The only clear argument is that the church, as the community in question, is responsible to embody them and presumably to play a primary role in character formation.[123] In response to how to identify virtues correctly and live them authentically as the church, Hauerwas suggests a twofold approach: a careful examination and emulation of the lives of the saints, and participation in church practices and liturgy, such as the Eucharist.[124] The former, as Healy describes, demonstrates "how the witness of the church, or at least the witness of exemplary individuals within it, can be understood and contrasted with how other communities and societies live, and how their 'truthfulness' or lack of it is embodied in their exemplary products—their 'saints'".[125] Consequently, if the church is the vehicle through which character formation occurs, the cultivating of virtues is largely dependent on the condition of the ecclesial community. As will become apparent, Hauerwas has little confidence that the church is navigating its ecclesiology in a way that fosters the kind of ultimate community he hopes for, making what is a noble pursuit—character formation—an exercise in futility.

This character deficiency raises a derivative issue, one which refers to the use of the Bible: Healy concludes from Hauerwas's work that, presumably, Christians without an appropriate character "should not be permitted to read Scripture and interpret it for

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[123] Brett however critiques Hauerwas at this point and suggests that his ecclesiology lacks development and clarity. Stephen F. Brett, review of *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic*, by Stanley Hauerwas, *Theological Studies* 43, no. 2 (1982): 352.

[124] See Hauerwas, *Unleashing the Scripture*, 99–104; Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 26.

[125] Healy, *Hauerwas*, 56.

themselves"[126] lest they distort its meaning. Given that, in the Hauerwasian theological worldview, correct interpretation of Scripture is dependent on "character", and "character" is largely dependent on "tradition", as Hays describes, "the classic Protestant idea that Scripture can challenge and judge tradition is simply an illusion, because it assumes an unmediated access to the meaning of the Bible that Hauerwas denies in principle".[127]

Sarisky's work also highlights the complicated relationship between Scripture and its interpretation that is exacerbated by Hauerwas's conception of community formation. For example, those who do not or cannot recognise Jesus for who he is, "had not received the training that would instil in them a whole set of practices that would give the text a whole different reading".[128] It is only practices (such as the Eucharist) that make possible a "Christological" reading of the Bible and simultaneously produce three considerations: "biblical interpretation requires formation as its precondition […] The text demands human transformation [yet it] does not bring it about [and] scripture transforms its readers indirectly by communicating its message only to those formed by ecclesial practices".[129] Hauerwas's approach, according to Sarisky, negates a "back-and-forth" dialectic present amongst alternative methods of biblical interpretation, necessitating, as a prerequisite, the "good order" of the community.[130] This position demonstrates the intertwined nature of Hauerwas's arguments, which cannot seem to avoid becoming self-enclosed, especially at the point of practical relevance.

While Hauerwas has not provided a "systematic framework" for character formation, he is reasonably convincing on the necessity of the church community for

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[126] Ibid., 63.

[127] Hays, *Moral Vision of the New Testament*, 263. Hauerwas "never sets Scripture and tradition in opposition to one another or subordinates Scripture to tradition. Rather tradition embodies the meaning of Scripture." Ibid.

[128] Hauerwas, *Unleashing the Scripture*, 56.

[129] Sarisky, *Scriptural Interpretation*, 195–96.

[130] Ibid., 196.

developing virtuous Christians.[131] The insistence on community moderation, to some degree, safeguards against challenges that arise from "horizontal" approaches to morality. Examples include the instrumental role of church practices, including sacraments, in character formation. Hauerwas writes that "the sacraments enact the story of Jesus and, thus, form a community in his image".[132] According to Sarisky, church practices cultivate community formation in three particular ways: initiation, continuity, and correction.[133] He writes that "practices such as catechesis bring people into the church"[134] and furthermore cultivate an identification with the people of God. For example, "Preparing them for baptism and showing them how to incorporate their own story into God's. These activities teach people to construe their identity and history in theological terms and offer a critique of contrary assumptions, especially those of the liberal establishment".[135] The portfolio of practices Hauerwas considers is not limited to the traditional sacraments. It includes liturgies and traditions that "regulate, shape and maintain the life of the church [given that] the church sometimes fails in its discipleship and, for this reason the community needs restorative practices such as penitence and admonition to reestablish its character as the body of Christ".[136]

This focus on community also presents an opportunity to reconsider the power of virtue ethics if the church can cultivate a people of true Christian character. One of the ways Hauerwas explains the neglect of virtue ethics more broadly is by saying that it arises from the "tacit fear that we lack the kind of community necessary to sustain development of people of virtue and character".[137] At this point, he is evidently talking in the realm of

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[131] As Paul Wadell notes of the Aristotelian framework, "the one thing that we cannot provide by ourselves is virtue. […] Virtue cannot be attained in solitude. By definition it is relationship because the virtuous life is the activity of doing good, of practicing good, of developing good habits; and as such, it needs opportunities to be exercised, it demands others on whom the good can be bestowed". Cf. Paul J. Wadell, *Friendship and the Moral Life* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 64.

[132] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 107.

[133] Sarisky, *Scriptural Interpretation*, 189.

[134] Ibid. See also Stanley Hauerwas and Samuel Wells, "The Gift of the Church and Gifts God Gives It," in Hauerwas and Wells, *Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics*, 18.

[135] Sarisky, *Scriptural Interpretation*, 189. See also Hauerwas and Wells, "Gift of the Church," 18.

[136] Sarisky, *Scriptural Interpretation*, 189. See also Hauerwas and Wells, "Gift of the Church," 19.

[137] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 117.

ecclesial idealism, rather than ecclesial realism, but his vision certainly establishes something to aim for. This vision may seem achievable, at least in theory, for some Christian communities, but a final caveat is required. Pentecostal churches, given their chronological infancy, struggle to form an intergenerational "community of character" to draw from and replicate. The ACC are no exception to this reality. Moreover, this difficulty is likely becoming more prominent in the west, as globalisation (partially a resistance against local loyalties) and urbanisation (and hence the cosmopolitan shift of Christianity in general) work against the cultivation of intergenerational communities in pentecostal churches, to a greater or lesser degree.[138]

5.3.4.2 The Relationship between Duty and Virtue

The second challenge in Hauerwas's work on virtue is to clarify the relationship between duty and virtue. A perennial problem for virtue ethicists to solve is that, if virtuous people do virtuous things, what are the things that virtuous people do? Sometimes the challenge is framed as follows: If morality is dependent only on the moral agent's motive and character, then actions carry only a derivate moral status. These represent the generic criticisms, but pertaining to Hauerwas's work specifically, there is also the question regarding moral culpability—whether a moral agent is culpable for their apparent evil actions, particularly if the agent performed them true to their narrative. The Hauerwasian worldview would likely say the agent is vindicated if they remained true to their narrative, at which point the narrative is at fault. These are questions that Hauerwas needs to address in more detail if he is to hold positions that elevate virtue in the way his writing indicates.

One of the ways in which Hauerwas approaches the first generic criticism, the constitution of virtuous actions, is to suggest that duty and virtue are not mutually exclusive ways of undertaking Christian ethics. "There is no inherent conflict between duty and virtue. The recognition and performance of duty is made possible because we are virtuous, and a person of virtue is dutiful because not to be so is to be less than

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[138] See Wariboko, *Charismatic City*, 32.

virtuous."[139] The practical application, however, remains confusing, as, generally speaking, "theoretical accounts fail to describe adequately the ways virtue and duty interrelate in our moral experience […] thus our 'duties' seem to require choices and decisions, whereas virtues do not" (other than our decisions to be virtuous!).[140] Moreover, Frankena, in light of Hauerwas, discusses the relationship between the virtue tradition's *is*es (being) and the duty tradition's *ought*s (doing), reminding us that "even the ethics of love is often represented as being based on or embodying either a command or an ought", demonstrating that even virtue proclivities can find their origin in deontic sensibilities.[141]

The second generic issue, that the morality of action is derivative of virtue, is more difficult to address. While Hauerwas argues that the community becomes the bedrock of virtues, and community necessarily evolves from narrative, teleologists and deontologists remain unconvinced by this reasoning. They argue that "there is hardly any way to portray 'the virtuous person' without reference to some antecedent criteria of good or right. Thus, concepts of virtue are parasitic on prior concepts of good or duty".[142] For them, ethical issues precede the virtues. From the perspective of the virtue theorist, however, it is difficult for the deontologist or indeed the utilitarian to make claims about the existence or potentiality of "a moral community", which remains Hauerwas's priority and unique contribution.[143]

5.3.4.3 An Ambiguous Theological Anthropology

A further issue arises when Hauerwas describes the relationship between virtue and human nature. If "virtue was that which caused a thing to perform its function well, it seemed that human virtue would be that which caused us to fulfill our function as humans".[144] A detailed account of human nature and purpose is, at best, vague in Hauerwas's work—for example, "making peace" or "forming friendships". It is all well and

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[139] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 114.

[140] Ibid.

[141] William K. Frankena, "Conversations with Carney and Hauerwas," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 3 (1975): 53.

[142] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 117.

[143] Ibid., 120.

[144] Ibid., 111.

good to assert that virtues assist in achieving the human *telos*, but with no systematic account of the virtues, one is left with nebulous criteria for making moral judgements and a simplistic account of how to maximise human nature.[145] This absence exacerbates an underlying issue noted earlier, that Hauerwas is reluctant to connect his positions to anything resembling a systematic theology. Instead, he leans on narrative theology derived from a particular reading of Scripture: an account of Jesus as the perfect embodiment of a peacemaker. A clear foundation for Hauerwas's thinking therefore exists; it simply does not meet expectations in the "systematic" sense. Given this, "the duty", so to speak, is to embody more perfectly the virtues that propel one towards becoming a Christlike peacemaker.

Nevertheless, modernity's obliteration of a uniform approach to the human telos confuses the matter further, making an articulated telos even more necessary. Hauerwas is almost entirely dependent on MacIntyre for this articulation and describes how modernity distorts the concept of "the good life" insofar as MacIntyre "conceives the contrast between man-as-he-happened-to-be and man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realised-his-essential-nature".[146] The idea that human beings have an essential telos is lost in the type of modernity that Hauerwas criticises: the secular liberalism that affords every individual the right to identify their own personal telos, given the lack of an innate purpose. Hauerwas's opposition to secular liberalism affirms the possibility that the human telos

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[145] Macintyre explores this breakdown by noting that a set of principles informed by a particular teleology is robbed of its context without the attendant understanding of its purpose, and of how the purpose is subsumed by the human telos. "Since the whole point of ethics—both as a theoretical and a practical discipline—is to enable man to pass from his present state to his true end, the elimination of any notion of essential human nature and with it the abandonment of any notion of a telos leaves behind a moral scheme composed of two remaining elements whose relationship becomes quite unclear. There is on the one hand a certain content for morality: a set of injunctions deprived of their teleological context. There is on the other hand a certain view of untutored-human-nature-as-it-is. Since the moral injunctions were originally at home in a scheme in which their purpose was to correct, improve and educate that human nature, they are clearly not going to be such as could be deduced from true statements about human nature or justified in some other way by appealing to its characteristics." MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 65.
[146] Ibid., 52.

can be located in the Christian story and dispels the myth that one's story is self-determined.[147]

While accounts of the human purpose could be articulated in a narrative, metanarrative, or a concrete systematic theology, Hauerwas relents from providing them explicitly.[148] Regarding systematic theology, "Hauerwas's sparing use of formal doctrinal language seems to spring from his worry that broader use of these categories inevitably supplants the narratives themselves".[149] He also admits that, in his early work, his ignoring of the importance of "happiness and friendship in Aristotle and Aquinas" produced a deficit that materialised in a less than sufficient reckoning with his teleological presuppositions.[150] Perhaps the closest he comes in this regard is his articulation of "friendship" as the centre of the moral life, but even in these instances, his position aggregates through the contribution of a co-author, Samuel Wells, in the first instance, and through a paper on particular social ethics by another author, Joel Shuman, in the second.[151] The two kinds of friendship described by Shuman include "our disposition toward God and our disposition toward one another",[152] and both find substantive meaning in the Christian community. He argues that "the common life of the community […] is both the medium for and the modality of the pursuit and achievement of friendship with God".[153] Hauerwas writes, "the virtues God's people learn in being friends of one another are vital in learning what it means to be God's friends forever".[154]

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[147] Sarisky, *Scriptural Interpretation*, 140–42.

[148] This could boil down to Hauerwas's understanding of the role of a theologian. For example, Cavanaugh explains that, in Hauerwas's view, "Theologians are just expositors of what the church thinks; [therefore] to have a position is to claim to know something the church does not. [Furthermore] Hauerwas claims that a theologian should not write for the ages, for to do so is to try to secure a position against the movement of the Spirit through time". Cavanaugh, "Stan the Man", 31.

[149] Sarisky, *Scriptural Interpretation*, 148.

[150] Stanley Hauerwas, "A Retrospective Assessment of an "Ethics of Character": The Development of Hauerwas's Theological Project (1985, 2001)," in Berkman and Cartwright, *Hauerwas Reader*, 83–84.

[151] Hauerwas and Wells, "Gift of the Church."

[152] Joel James Shuman, "Eating Together: Friendship and Homosexuality," in *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas and Samuel Wells (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 406.

[153] Ibid.

[154] Hauerwas and Wells, "Gift of the Church," 16. See also Sarisky, *Scriptural Interpretation*, 187, 97.

Anthropology is not the only systematics lacking in Hauerwas's work, and it becomes difficult to locate foundational anchors that could ground or guide the application of his ethical worldview. Healy, however, reminds us that "theology is not a major structural or material part of [Hauerwas's] argument but it clearly informs it".[155] He argues that parallels exist between Hauerwas's work on ethics and Schleiermacher's work on theology that not only illuminate Hauerwas's arguments but also identify theological vantage points worth contemplating.[156] As the intersections resonate more with Hauerwas's ecclesiological proposals, they will be revisited in the next section.

Nevertheless, Sarisky identifies two categories of theological problems with Hauerwas's work—formal and material.[157] Regarding the formal, Sarisky argues that "what Hauerwas says about human beings bears a disturbing resemblance to the secular views he is struggling to overcome […] he insists the reader has an end, but he is remarkably vague on the content of that end. [Moreover] he tends to de-emphasize the beginning of the reader as well".[158] All of this is eclipsed by the focus on the "reader's" existence "in the middle", which Sarisky comments is decidedly reflective of secular approaches to personhood.[159] Regarding the material issues, Sarisky identifies an "over-realized eschatology" within Hauerwas's work. Connected with the formal issue, where

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[155] "His Christian beliefs, or perhaps rather more accurately, his beliefs about Christianity, prompt him to seek changes in the church, for which he provides reasons that often depend upon largely theologically-neutral considerations." Healy, *Hauerwas*, 10.

[156] Healy writes that "Hauerwas's ecclesiocentric approach shares much with Friedrich Schleiermacher's work certainly more than is generally acknowledged". Ibid., 44. Healy continues, "According to Schleiermacher, the essence of religion ('piety,' which is the form of our basic relation to God) is neither a set of doctrines nor a moral code." Ibid., 45. Quoting Schleiermacher, the essence of religion is a "feeling of absolute dependence" on something other than ourselves, which is "the same thing [as] being in relation to God." Schleiermacher, *Christian Faith*, 12. Healy continues, "it must acquire form, something that is possible only if one joins a 'religious communion'—a church of some kind—that has a distinct and therefore largely settled identity. The function of any such community is to evoke and purify our inner experience—our 'self-consciousness'—to express it and develop it to higher levels, so that our piety may inform everything we think and do". Healy, *Hauerwas*, 45–46.

[157] Sarisky, *Scriptural Interpretation*, 154.

[158] Ibid.

[159] Ibid. This is also acknowledged in Hauerwas, *Hannah's Child*, x.

Hauerwas emphasises the present at the expense of the end, there is "unresolved tension in Hauerwas's view".[160] How can he claim on the one hand that the church exists to remind the people of God what is yet to come, and on the other that "the church is a people of virtue and a community of character"?[161] Notwithstanding that the tension between the present and the future is not unique to the Hauerwasian view, the absence of a clear eschatological vision renders the future eclipsed by the present.[162]

Additionally, other than the Christological comments summarised above, the origin of virtue has not been given specific attention, probably because, as Hauerwas indicates, "the meaning and content of virtue would be relative to the controverted issue of what is 'human nature'".[163] Another way of explaining this "deficiency" is Hauerwas's practical focus (on the church), which occurs at the expense of a theological undergirding and perhaps has rendered systematic theology distorted.[164] To the casual observer, Hauerwas's relationship with doctrine is a tricky one. He is clearly "theological" but "he seldom offers a synthetic treatment of a doctrinal locus; instead, he typically approaches themes by reflecting theologically on specific pastoral problems. Theology is, thus, reflective commentary on ecclesial practices".[165] This approach is, in part, a recapitulation of his philosophical problems with quandary ethics. He opposes the view that theological discourse should take place abstracted from the community in the manner of an outside observer.[166]

Nevertheless, it does appear that Hauerwas's conception of systematic theology and his conception of Christian (systematic) ethics are subject to the same challenges if the expectation is they will resemble what has gone before, which Hauerwas identifies as the "standard account". Where Hauerwas has argued strongly that ethics is not primarily

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[160] Sarisky, *Scriptural Interpretation*, 155.

[161] Ibid., 156.

[162] For example, the acceptance of "both and" is reasonably common in Christian theology. See World Council of Churches, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, Faith and Order Paper No. 214 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2013), 21–22.

[163] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 111.

[164] Healy, *Hauerwas*, 16.

[165] Sarisky, *Scriptural Interpretation*, 186.

[166] Ibid.

about crisis management (which is the landscape of the "standard account" and "quandary ethics"), he also recognises that "the virtuous person confronts some difficulties exactly because he or she is virtuous. [For example] [t]he coward can never know the fears of the courageous".[167] Where Healy attempts to find some coherence and resolution in this discussion is by resting both systematic theology and Christian ethics within Hauerwas's understanding of the determinative nature of church and its attendant practices; hence ecclesiology becomes not simply a supplementary dimension to Hauerwasian ethics but a necessary pillar.[168]

5.3.4.4 The Coherency of Virtue Ethics: Virtue and Narrative

I have already noted that the relationship between narrative and virtue within the Hauerwasian framework needs further clarity. Having analysed his virtue ethics, I will now revisit the relationship, given Hauerwas's narrative proposals can appear subjectivist on the one hand, and deterministic on the other. The former recognises that narrative is at the mercy of any individual's particular understanding of the world (however flawed) and the latter reminds us that any narrative wields power over moral agents and can compel actions that are, simultaneously, both authentic and destructive. Narrative's subjectivism was addressed earlier pertaining to its relativistic flavour, so I will briefly address the latter.

When discussing the link between agency and virtue, Hauerwas's major contention is twofold: firstly, that "our character is not merely the result of our choices, but rather the form our agency takes through our beliefs and intentions",[169] and secondly, "any attempt to describe human behaviour completely in terms of random causation—causally relating our actions as one random event to another—is doomed to failure".[170] Clearly Hauerwas does not possess a deterministic view of human behaviour but holds that our beliefs (worldview) assist character development and moral choices. Given that, in his view, character influences behaviour, there are two consequences for Christian

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[167] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 115.

[168] Healy, *Hauerwas*, 22.

[169] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 39.

[170] Ibid., 42.

ethics. Firstly, the Christian story must be both "taught" and "lived" as it is primarily embodied rather than theorised.[171] Secondly, our freedom (nondeterminism) only becomes intelligible through a particular account of freedom articulated in the narrative of Jesus and his church.[172] Where he seems to highlight agency, however, is in its ability to make "retrospective judgments", framing it as follows: "agency names those skills necessary to make our past our own, though it's often constituted by decisions we thought at the time were 'free' but which from our current perspective we can now see were made without our knowing what we were doing when we made them".[173] Freedom works better talking retrospectively—this is the best use of our freedom.

Regarding retrospective judgement, the feedback loop could look as follows: "The Christian starts somewhere. But not everybody starts in the same place, and where you start is bound to shape how and what you think and how and why you act".[174] This is "beginning in the middle" or "the embeddedness" of moral life within a community producing "wisdom". As Hauerwas writes: "casuistry is the mode of wisdom developed by a community to test past innovations as well as anticipate future challenges".[175] Furthermore, as Stout argues, "Future experience and dialogue with others may convince you to change your mind. Being reasonable requires openness to that possibility […] We can only begin where we are and do our best to deal reasonably with what we inherit from our tradition, changing our minds when we have good reason, from our own point of view, for doing so".[176]

In this regard, according to Hauerwas, reflecting upon and evaluating past moral decisions is the best way by which virtues can continually be subject to maturation, moderation, and reformation. This practice also provides a partial answer to the earlier question regarding how one "develops character", and likely the most helpful reading of

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[171] Ibid., 44.

[172] "For to continue that story the life of Christ is the source of our freedom. We are finally no self, no agent, until we are the self that God has called us to be." Ibid., 46.

[173] Hauerwas, *Sanctify Them*, 99.

[174] Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, 145–46.

[175] Stanley Hauerwas, "Casuistry in Context: The Need for Tradition (1995)," in Berkman and Cartwright, *Hauerwas Reader*, 282.

[176] Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, 145–46.

Hauerwas at this point. Retrospective analysis concerns how virtue and tradition can become a source for moral decision-making insofar as one's character develops, subject to community involvement and past experiences. In contrast, "mainstream" Christian ethics is generally concerned with prospective analysis: "what would you do if this happened?"[177] It is here where we see the challenges that Hauerwas seems to have with ethics orientated around a crisis response. Prospective analysis not only negates context, positing scenarios isolated from a narrative, but it is also chronologically quarantined. The *you* in the challenge is not asking any questions of moral agency but requiring only hypothetical actions unimplicated by character or tradition.[178]

Therefore, Hauerwas argues that "our moral lives are more properly constituted by retrospective rather than prospective judgements".[179] Furthermore, any sense of agency that we perceive ourselves having is an extension of a pre-existing character, with of course the capacity for reflection and modification. In this regard "character is the source of our agency, that is, our ability to act with integrity" [180] and consistency in light of our own unfolding story.

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[177] Hauerwas argues in a similar way as follows: "To judge an alternative course to be destructive, of course, requires some experience of its effects on those who practice the skills it embodies. It is the precise role of narrative to offer us a way of experiencing those effects without experimenting with our own lives as well". Hauerwas and Jones, *Why Narrative?*, 187.

[178] In *The Peaceable Kingdom* Hauerwas makes an equivalent point: "It is as if the individual simply bumps up against decisions devoid of any communal context." Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 130. Larsen elaborates how "Moral reasoning rarely relies on prospective deduction from a practical syllogism, which consists of a universal claim, a particular judgment, and an act. Instead, we have become ourselves through the habit-forming decisions that have preceded that moment, and so our response to any moral quandary relies on who we have become given the conditions of our formation. The moment of moral agency therefore always catches us in some middle position." Larsen, "How I Think Hauerwas Thinks," 28. Larsen also describes how prospective judgement "neglects a particular agent's contingency in the analysis of an 'act'." Ibid., 28. To use Hauerwas's words, these types of judgements are the "obverse of existentialist ethics". Hauerwas and Burrell, "System to Story," 159.

[179] Hauerwas, *Sanctify Them*, 99. Perhaps the most well-known example he gives is that of marriage: "But I take it that the 'breakdown' of marriage in our society is partly due precisely to an exaggerated sense of agency that underwrites the presumption that we should not be held responsible for decisions we made when we did not know what we were doing". Ibid., 109.

[180] Ibid., 101–2.

5.3.5 Conclusion: Virtue Is the Character(s) Produced by Communal Narratives

This section has analysed the second pillar of Hauerwas's theological ethics: virtue and character. The purpose was not to argue virtue ethics' superiority over alternative models of reasoning, nor was it intended to suggest that Hauerwas solves all problems associated with the "standard account". Although there are some misgivings with Hauerwas's proposal, Reno has clarified the power of Hauerwas's alternative by highlighting that "principle and duty" have done little historical good to curtail the evil that Christian ethics supposedly addresses. He also describes how the church functions to cultivate an identity—the church exists to "cement our allegiance and solidify our defences".[181] Alone the following are insufficient: righteous principles, good intentions, clarification of duty, a "Christian" vision of justice.

While in Hauerwas's approach, virtues are the fruit by which narratives can be judged, narratives are lived by men and women of specific character. The moral agents therefore play a role, both shaping the narrative that perpetuates or challenges the "state of play", and embodying a particular morality produced by it. The community within which the narrative is sustained is therefore determined by and determinative of character and characters. In Hauerwas's ethics, therefore, the community matters, and Reno contends that "The church provides the glue that cements together such practices, and many others, into a whole capable of resisting worldly powers".[182]

Through the analysis of narrative and virtue above, it becomes apparent that the efficacy of Hauerwas's proposals, both theoretically in terms of the methodological framework, and practically in terms of implementation, necessitates a third pillar to his ethics: Hauerwas's ecclesiology. The church, as the narrative frame *and* community of character will, therefore, now be examined.

5.4 Analysis of Hauerwas's Ecclesiology

Hauerwas's alternative to the "standard account" thus far develops by way of the following elements: a narrative that truthfully reflects the story of God, Israel, Jesus, and

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[181] Reno, "Stanley Hauerwas," 309.

[182] Ibid.

his church; character that authenticates the narrative by reflecting a virtuous and significant people; and a church that recalls and lives the narrative, engaging in practices and habits through which character formation can occur. Firstly, I will consider Hauerwas's perspective on the church and its institutional position within society, particularly his ideas regarding its separation from the state and the affairs of public life in general. Following this, I will then address three criticisms levelled against his ecclesiology.

5.4.1 Hauerwas's Ecclesiological Proposals

For Hauerwas, the "community of character" he describes is the church, demonstrating not just the synthesis of virtue with ecclesiology but their reciprocity within his theological ethics. The most significant of Hauerwas's writings on the church, other than those dealing with its function as the custodian of the Christian narrative, are his arguments in favour of "ecclesial separateness".

Hauerwas argues that "if the church is to serve our liberal society or any society, it is crucial for Christians to regain an appropriate sense of separateness from that society".[183] The primary challenge, in his mind, is the "selling out" to liberal pluralist values, which renders the church's contribution at best as a set of nice ideals, and at worst as a social club that is tolerated but not taken particularly seriously. The ACC, like other pentecostal movements, exist in a western liberal democracy, and there is certainly a danger that they could relinquish their identity in this way. It is important then to recognise that Hauerwas is speaking about the idealised church and there is therefore always a gap between what is and what could be.

This separatist ecclesiology impacts his broader ethical approach in two ways.[184] Firstly, the church has a distinct integrity separate from any other group or institution;

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[183] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 2.

[184] Ibid. While this is a capstone work of his, the only label one could possibly give Hauerwas is that of a narrative ethicist; beyond that, as L. Gordon Tait points out, "[he] defies easy labelling." Tait, review of *A Community of Character*, 1031. This is of course assuming one can agree on the meaning of "narrative ethicist". It appears Poirier's apprehensions noted earlier regarding a narrative approach to ethics are supported by Tait, who contends that Hauerwas is "annoyingly vague as he uses such terms as narrative,

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and secondly, its task is to be the community that faithfully embodies specific virtues consistent with its story in the Bible. If the church is to be characterised by separateness, then what does Hauerwas understand the church's role to be? He writes: "It is not the task of the church to try to develop social theories or strategies to make America work; rather the task of the church in this country is to become a polity that has the character necessary to survive as a truthful society".[185] He is clearly concerned that the church have the fortitude to "withstand" forces that might oppose or distort it, but at the same time he insists that the way the church maintains integrity and identity is by separation, rather than by engagement. Hauerwas therefore sees many forms of ecclesial social engagement as compromise, subjecting the church to dilution and thus weakening its ability to be the "community of character".

Given that Hauerwas is uncompromising on the need for the church's "separation" it is possible to interpret him as a zealous sectarian. Stout argues that Hauerwas's "heavy-handed use of the term 'liberalism' as an all-purpose critical instrument continually reinforces the impression that total rejection is in fact required", keeping "the charge of sectarianism alive".[186] Nevertheless, to label Hauerwas a sectarian is an overstatement.[187] It is not as clear-cut as a choice between "complete involvement in culture or complete withdrawal",[188] nor does Hauerwas deny that Christians necessarily co-exist in a variety of shared spheres.[189] As an aside, his reference to "America" in his writing is simply a contextualisation of his proposals, but it does indicate that his ethics also incorporates an

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story, church, Christian community, and liberalism, as though we know what he means". Ibid., 1032. Additionally, Thomson lists specific labels Hauerwas rejects, including sectarian, fideist, tribalist, and relativist. John Thomson, "Training Political Leaders: Theological Education, Ministerial Formation and the Ecclesiology of Stanley Hauerwas," *British Journal of Theological Education* 14, no. 1 (2003): 49.

[185] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 3.

[186] Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, 147.

[187] In a conversation with Samuel Wells, Hauerwas maintains that to call his ecclesiology "sectarian" is "a misreading of the kind of work [he has] tried to do". Simultaneously, he takes responsibility for the misinterpretation of his position and understands why those assumptions are made. Wells and Hauerwas, *In Conversation*, 20–21.

[188] Stanley Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today: Essays on Church, World, and Living in Between* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010), 11.

[189] Ibid., 15.

emerging vision and a standard to be strived for. In this regard he is proposing a model of separatist witness and community rather than an example of one. His context demonstrates, as Michael Duffy writes, that the American church "has little sense of itself as a formation community".[190] Hauerwas's own church, therefore, is unable to begin adopting the idealistic approach he describes. This disconnect is where much of the critique against Hauerwas is raised, particularly by those who desire to grapple seriously with his arguments. Ogletree summarises the concerns:

> My chief problem […] is that he has advocated a "sectarian" witness without at the same time attending to the social conditions necessary to give authenticity to that witness. As long as Christian people are heavily involved in the major institutions of a society and are dependent in fundamental ways for their well-being on those institutions, they are not likely to have the personal and social resources necessary for sustaining a radical witness to society.[191]

Hauerwas does not appear to have a direct answer to these problems. Probably about as far as he is willing to go is to emphasise repeatedly the importance of the character of the church community.[192] He applies this logic across all institutions and narratives, which at least brings consistency to his moral analysis. Indeed, this is how he believes all politics should be judged: "The depth and variety of character which a polity sustains is a correlative of the narrative that provides its identity and purpose".[193] The politics of the church, while subject to the same critiques, is unique because it is supplied

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[190] Michael K. Duffey, review of *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic*, by Stanley Hauerwas, *Cross Currents* 32, no. 4 (1982): 503.

[191] Ogletree, "Character and Narrative," 30.

[192] Ogletree does not accept these arguments in these simplistic terms. "I find Hauerwas's account confusing at this point. On the surface it is incredibly intellectualistic and voluntaristic, and in Christian terms, downright Pelagian." Ibid., 26.

[193] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 51.

by the life of Jesus, who cannot be known in this way outside the narrative of Christianity.[194]

While I think there is a "gap" in his work for those seeking a wholistic ethic of social engagement, Hauerwas's focus on the integrity of the church remains his intentional focus. Based on Hauerwasian narrative and virtue, the church is so integral to the embodiment and emergence of his ethics, a strategy for public engagement amid ecclesial distortion is an exercise in futility as well as a distraction from his priorities.

5.4.2 Challenges with Hauerwas's Ecclesiology

Hauerwas's arguments encouraging the separateness of the church attract various criticisms. Firstly, Healy argues that Hauerwas writes as if being "liberal" or being "Constantinian" renders living as a Christian impossible;[195] and secondly, such positions tend to make Hauerwas come across as strident and in some cases arrogant. His stridency bears no relevance to the validity of his arguments but can in some instances produce a PR problem. Cavanaugh explains that Hauerwas's "tone" could be a potential roadblock to Hauerwas's audience and even describes his character as "so complex and so public that it often threatens to overwhelm and obscure the importance of his work".[196] Although criticisms of his tone and style are reasonably common, this section will focus on the substantive observations of his ecclesiological proposals.

Four challenges that arise include firstly, his unacknowledged dependence on ecclesiology as the focal point of all his theological and ethical positions. Secondly, his casual and non-descript use of the term "church" as a fundamental definition on which much of his ecclesiology is dependent. A derivative challenge also emerges given that an ambiguous understanding of "legitimate church" fails to produce consistent narratives and ethics. Thirdly, Hauerwas's vocation as a "theologian of the church" is precarious given the difficulty in locating him within the church, rendering his ecclesial authority

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[194] Ibid.

[195] Healy, *Hauerwas*, 7–8. Reno clarifies what Hauerwas means by the term "Constantinianism": "he uses it in diverse ways. At times he seems to advance an (unconvincing) historical thesis about the 'fall' of the primitive church into a captivity to worldly vanity and illusions of social significance. At other times, his use of 'Constantinianism' is a rhetorical device for sharpening contrasts". Reno, "Stanley Hauerwas," 310.

[196] Cavanaugh, "Stan the Man", 30.

unclear. The final challenge is best extrapolated by Stout, who highlights the overall weaknesses in the progression of Hauerwas's arguments—that promoting the church and its members as change agents in the world culminates in the unhelpful binary between "sectarian ecclesiology and liberal democracy".

5.4.2.1 The Ecclesial Centring of Hauerwas's Theology

This initial challenge highlights that Hauerwas's general rejection of systematics disregards two realities: firstly, the dependency of much of his theological and ethical writing on a particular ecclesiology, and secondly, the very logic of his rejection of systematics—"a fascinating game in which the various *loci* are reconfigured by making one *locus* determinative of all the others."[197] He reconfigures his theology around the *locus* of ecclesiology. Given that Hauerwas himself recognises the former—that his ethics is imbedded in an ecclesiology—I will briefly address the latter.

Healy writes that the alienation of systematics, or at least Hauerwas's characterisation of it, is too simplistic, given "that we can see something along such lines in Hauerwas's own argument". He continues, "it is the church—understood in the distinctively Hauerwasian way—that provides the structure and principles of his understanding of Christianity".[198] In other words, "the church" becomes the "determinative locus" that mediates and gives rise to everything else in his work.[199] Ironically, Healy questions whether Hauerwas could be the "American-ethics" equivalent of a "type of modern German theology".[200] By way of example, Healy compares Hauerwas's theology of the church to that of Schleiermacher, noting the structural and philosophical similarities, as well as the distinctions, and notes the two methodological distinctives that arise in Schleiermacher's work: "the turn to the subject" and "the turn to the church". "With these two 'turns,' to the subject and to the church, Schleiermacher displaces the object of traditional theological inquiry. Theology no longer treats of",[201] as

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[197] Hauerwas, *Sanctify Them*, 2.

[198] Healy, *Hauerwas*, 38.

[199] "His own presentation of Christianity, though far more American than Germanic, is similarly founded upon, and governed by, a single locus—in his case, the church." Ibid., 39.

[200] Ibid., 38.

[201] Ibid., 47.

Schleiermacher writes, "God and things in relation to God".[202] Hauerwas, of course, intensifies both dimensions through his narrative-orientated virtue ethics, and the formative and determinative traditions of the church, declaring "all theology must begin and end with ecclesiology".[203]

There is no reason to think, therefore, that Hauerwas's theological ethics is not vulnerable to the same possible distortions of theology by systematics that Hauerwas is so concerned about, particularly given that the airtime he affords systematic theology in his work remains limited. At the same time, Schleiermacher's (and Hauerwas's!) arguments are powerful: without "the church" (or an equivalent determinative community) an "individual would be left with vague religious feelings, unable to develop to a higher stage, and academic theology would have little or nothing to say". Yet, as Healy further notes, "[With] this ecclesiocentric relocation of doctrine, theology can talk about God only after it talks or as it talks about the church. Christian doctrine is modified and arguably distorted as a result".[204]

This critique is worth highlighting because it moderates some of the Hauerwasian rhetoric that repudiates systematic, mainstream, and liberal theology. It recognises that not only is his work dependent on a system of theological beliefs regarding the church, but the philosophical and structural assumptions that undergird his theology of the church are mirrored in the work of a German systematic theologian. There are of course substantial differences between the two theologians, the major point, however, is to recognise that Hauerwas might be more "within" tradition than he cares to admit.[205] Nevertheless, the resonance does not require that Hauerwas's work be discarded, but only that it be subjected to scrutiny similar to that which he affords others with great liberality.

5.4.2.2 The Ambiguity of "The Church"

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[202] Schleiermacher, *Christian Faith*, 88.

[203] Hauerwas, *In Good Company*, 58.

[204] Healy, *Hauerwas*, 48.

[205] For example, "The basic difference lies in Hauerwas's firm rejection and constructive 'reversal' of Schleiermacher's inner moment and its purported consequence, the spiritualization of faith, as well as his rejection of Schleiermacher's affirmation of the symbiotic relationship between church and society". Ibid.

Secondly, regarding Hauerwas's discussion of "the church", Healy argues, "[Hauerwas] will use a word in a way that seems to apply generally, but clearly cannot. For instance, he will talk about 'the church', but say things about it that do not apply, say, to most of its denominations, or to the great majority of the members of any church".[206] Hauerwas clearly lacks the specificity in his writing (whether intentional or not) to assist his readers in establishing the parameters of his own critique. The ambiguity around Hauerwas's conception of "the church" as a social organisation only clouds his own critique by alienating his audience.[207] To the charge that Hauerwas speaks of a non-existent church when he is articulating his community of character, Stout agrees.[208] In Hauerwas's American context, the church exists in a state of hypocrisy when measured against Hauerwas's own standards—clearly not embodying the pacifist standards so described. On the other hand, admitting this reality "causes the substance of virtue to evaporate into mere ideality".[209]

Even if the ideal church were identified, there remains some pragmatic challenges. One of the emphases throughout Hauerwas's ethics is the church community's social fabric with respect to virtue and narrative. He is not limiting its role as the mouthpiece of ethical proclamations (although this function is not explicitly excluded), but as, according to Burrell, "the social institution seeking to embody a specific configuration of virtues in its members".[210] This embodiment is continuously emphasised throughout *The Peaceable Kingdom* given that the church is conceived as a vehicle for the lived moral life rather than simply as a source of moral authority in the traditional sense. Assuming that a uniform definition of church, in the Hauerwas sense, were established, the diversity within all churches would render community homogeneity an unlikely phenomenon. The production of an eclectic ethics from an eclectic set of communities would call into

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[206] Ibid., 12.

[207] Notwithstanding that all ecclesiological language has its limitations insofar as it retains an "ideal" dimension (what could be), and a "real" dimension (what is). These distinctions are explored in detail in Neil Ormerod, "Vatican II: Continuity or Discontinuity? Toward an Ontology of Meaning," *Theological studies* 71, no. 3 (2010): 625–28.

[208] Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, 160.

[209] Ibid.

[210] David Burrell in Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, ix.

question, according to Hauerwas's own rules, the legitimacy of the narratives that are informing them. Given these realities, "the church" remains ambiguous, and congregational "identity" is a very difficult concept to pin down.[211]

5.4.2.3 Hauerwas's Ecclesial Legitimacy

Thirdly, Hauerwas would likely consider himself an ecclesial authority; according to Hauerwas's own thinking, theological authority can only exist as an expression of ecclesial tradition. Nevertheless, his ecclesial identity is convoluted, firstly considering "he did not know he was a Protestant until he was told so by the new department chair"[212] at his Catholic university. And secondly, Hauerwas's tendency to "pew hop" from church to church suggests he does not take his own proposals seriously enough to ground his activities in the ecclesial community.[213] Although Hauerwas's commitment issue does not necessarily preclude an academic use of his work, it might question his credibility, particularly his determination and commitment to outwork his positions in an ecclesial context. The charge becomes one of hypocrisy on Hauerwas's part. While hypocrisy is hardly a revolutionary claim against a theologian, nor one unfamiliar to Hauerwas given John Howard Yoder's influence on his own thinking, hypocrisy alone does not necessitate dismissal.

It is likely, however, that when Hauerwas refers to "church" in his writing he is doing so generically. While occasionally launching attacks on, for example, "the American church", his insistence on the importance of church does not at any point discriminate between denominations.[214] This generality indicates that his ecclesiological convictions do not rise or fall on the particularity of church traditions and additionally provides some explanation for the denominational ambiguity evidenced above. If it is indeed the case

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[211] Healy, *Hauerwas*, 16.

[212] Cavanaugh, "Stan the Man," 24.

[213] For all the references to church and the importance placed on church by Hauerwas, Reno contends that Hauerwas's "church" can be difficult to pin down: "Born hardscrabble Methodist, socialized into mainline Protestant intellectual life at Yale, a some-time communicant at Catholic Masses during his Notre Dame years, a Mennonite fellow traveller, and presently worshipping among the Episcopalians". Reno, "Stanley Hauerwas and the Liberal Protestant Project," 320.

[214] Hauerwas, *War and the American Difference*, 156.

that Hauerwas does not consider denominational distinctions important, then perhaps his hypocrisy is less stark and his pew-hopping around "churches" does not negate an overarching commitment to "the church".

The challenge to Hauerwas's ecclesiology, given his tendency to pew-hop is more subtle. The community dimension to Hauerwas's ethics asserts character formation as a by-product of a narrative-informed church community. Cavanaugh illuminates the weakness in Hauerwas's position by noting the "emphasis on constancy and constitutive community".[215] If Hauerwas himself has not submitted to the arduous process of character formation that can occur only within an ecclesial community over time, there is no way to guarantee the integrity of his own positions. Furthermore, if the positions themselves have not been exposed to a church community consistently enough to undergo reformation, correction, and confirmation by the tradition, they are potentially not a product of the process that Hauerwas argues is necessary for the formation of ethical positions. This ambiguity renders questionable the pillars of his own ethics, which has not clearly emerged in the way he proposes it ideally should.

Hauerwas addresses the lack of ecclesial loyalty and consistency as follows: "Perhaps the reason I stress so strongly the significance of the church for social ethics is that I am currently not disciplined by, nor do I feel the ambiguity of, any concrete church. Such a position could be deeply irresponsible, as it invites intellectual dishonesty [...] I find I must think and write not only for the church that does exist but for the church that should exist if we were more courageous and faithful".[216] His self-assessment indicates that he is at least aware that this perception challenges the integrity of his positions. Recently he shifted his allegiance toward the United Methodist Church, indicating a move toward identification and accountability. Reflecting on accountability in light of the ecclesial emphasis in his writings, he contends that to "have something to say, you have to be at least willing to be accountable to some community. That's part of why the emphasis upon the church is so important to me. It's a matter of accountability".[217]

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[215] Cavanaugh, "Stan the Man," 22.

[216] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 6.

[217] Brock and Hauerwas, *Beginnings*, 68.

Nevertheless, this new allegiance, according to Hays, is contradictory given Hauerwas's own ethical positions, and the reality that the United Methodist Church in the United States is "a large, pluralistic, bureaucratic organization that champions precisely the values of liberal individualism that Hauerwas decries. It is for the most part, not formed significantly by regular eucharistic practice, it has no clear tradition of standing against war and violence, and is separated from the Roman Catholic Church whose tradition-bearing Hauerwas so prizes".[218] Although Cavanaugh, Healy and Hays all highlight this dissonance in Hauerwas's theory and ecclesial habits, they neglect to interrogate further why Hauerwas's contempt of the established church precludes him holding his positions, bypassing an ecclesiology critique on the grounds of a (legitimate) character critique. Nevertheless, the imperfection of church, often, has not deterred Hauerwas from worshipping in a congregation. Moreover, potentially his collection of criticisms renders him more attuned to the challenges therein—familiarity may breed contempt, but it does not necessarily require rejection.

Healy, however, recognises more than inconsistencies, but some major challenges stemming from attempts to align Hauerwas's perspectives on the biblical text with his ecclesiology. For example, when Hauerwas in some instances "rejects the ordinary, well-established teachings of the church, it follows that he interprets Scripture as an individual"[219]—a Reformation-type position that Hauerwas himself rejects outright. Healy's question subsequently emerges: "On what authority does Hauerwas believe that he has the right to interpret Scripture? […] What is different about him, compared with ordinary Christians who are not to interpret Scripture for themselves?"[220] Moreover, whether intentionally or not, the implementation of some of Hauerwas's work would

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[218] Hays, *Moral Vision of the New Testament*, 265. Hays continues: "To put this problem another way, the logic of Hauerwas's hermeneutical position should require him to become a Roman Catholic. The Roman Catholic Church, however, historically teaches positions on major ethical issues (such as just war and the role of women in the church) that Hauerwas cannot accept. Thus he refuses to have his mind and character formed by that tradition and chooses instead to live, anomalously, as a protestant with no clear theological rationale for this ecclesial practice and no empirical community to exemplify his vision for ecclesial politics". Ibid.

[219] Healy, *Hauerwas*, 63.

[220] Ibid.

achieve a dismantling of traditional ecclesial structures, leading to a fragmentation of the narratives rather than a consolidation of them. This fragmentation renders much of his teaching on the importance of "an intergenerational community of character" capable of "forming its members" with the "virtues consistent with the narrative of Jesus Christ" questionable given that, in Hauerwasian theological ethics, truthful narratives are essential for any acceptable interpretation of Scripture. How can he assert such a standard while alienating himself from the very type of community he is arguing for? To the question on what authority Hauerwas claims to teach from as a non-ordained, ecclesial nomad, Hauerwas's only answer is "I wish I had a good response to that troubling question".[221]

5.4.2.4 The Liberal versus Ecclesial Binary

The final challenge pertains to the progression of Hauerwas's arguments, to which Stout earmarks three blind spots that culminate in, what Stout describes, the unhelpful dichotomy between the church and the world (and their respective priorities). The blind spots identified by Stout emerge as follows:

> (1) an uncharitable attitude toward the world, especially in its democratic forms; (2) a failure to distinguish adequately between disappearing into the world and pursuing justice as a responsible member of one's national community; and (3) excessive pride in the visibility of the church as a virtuous community. The first and third temptations combine to form another: (4) excessive certainty that one possesses the virtue of discernment, the capacity to tell the difference between the way of the world and the stirrings of the Spirit.[222]

One of the consequences of this combination of challenges is that it hinders Hauerwas's ability to reach a broad audience. However, Stout warns that Hauerwas's simplistic reduction of his opposition to "liberals" and "liberalism" fails as a strategy and lacks intellectual honesty given that this approach both denigrates shared charity towards

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[221] Hauerwas, *Unleashing the Scripture*, 10.

[222] Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, 156.

one's interlocuters, and lacks the nuance to distinguish between the very real problems that liberalism has produced and the less pernicious realities accompanying it.[223] This oversimplification, in my estimation, touches on Stout's most effective methodological critique of Hauerwas's work: the binary and oppositional reinforcement of liberal democracy versus sectarian ecclesiology.

This adversarial relationship, which Hauerwas promotes, does little justice to the realities that Christians should be concerned with in relation to the integrity of the church but that also, concurrently, operate outside the ecclesial space. Stout describes that this reality has necessitated alliances outside of the church that have fueled causes perceived to have common ground with the Hauerwasian oppositional paradigm. Examples such as the abolition of slavery, the equal opportunities afforded to women (and others) must be rejected, in Hauerwas's reductive view, as "spoiled fruit of a misguided Constantinianism".[224]

A direct contrast can be made with traditional ecclesiologies that, as Healy writes, begin by defining "the church primarily in terms of God's action that brings it into being. Only once that is done does it go on to discuss the church's differences from other religions and societies. Furthermore, traditional theology does not claim that its membership achieves or has the possibility of achieving within the church the highest form of humanity (Schleiermacher) or community (Hauerwas)".[225] These pinnacles are not simply ideals that orientate the activity of the church, but necessary standards if the Hauerwasian model is to function in an effective and optimal way.[226]

5.4.3 Conclusion: The Church Is the Custodian of the Christian Narrative

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[223] Ibid., 156–57.

[224] Ibid., 157.

[225] Healy, *Hauerwas*, 49.

[226] Healy identifies two areas of disagreement between Hauerwas's and Schleiermacher's ecclesiologies, the latter of which establishes a more generous and comprehensible view of the church. "Thus we find significant common elements within broader disagreements, the disagreements arising for the most part of our diverse understandings of 1) persons as primarily centers of consciousness or persons as primarily bodily agents; and 2) the relation between the church and the wider society construed positively and collaboratively or largely agonistically." Ibid., 51.

Notwithstanding these criticisms, I suggest that we accept Hauerwas's proposals on the basis that there is nothing fundamentally wrong with their inherent idealism and the hope that they embody—that is, writing of what the church in the world "could be", rather than, what it currently is. Indeed, his hope is that the church, as well as being an institution capable of forming its members "in the virtues of patience and hope",[227] may also be able to instil the capacity "to discriminate in particular situations".[228] That no denomination currently embodies Hauerwas's vision of a perfect church, or that he constantly expresses dissatisfaction with the state of the church, is not an adequate reason to reject his writings. Rather, it is necessary to accept that these failings may indeed be what motivates his arguments for an ideal church as the place where narrative is preserved, and character formation occurs.

Additionally, his vision of the church's separation need not imply that the church is radically set apart in an isolated sense. Rather, it is part of the world, but the separation is necessary to preserve its narrative and virtue as a community if it is going to interact meaningfully with the world on moral issues. The separation does not mean that the church necessarily rejects everything that is of the world (liberal or otherwise). Rather, it can accept that which is in line with the virtues formed by its core narrative, and test and challenge all other developments through its prophetic voice and its social ethics.

Cavanaugh describes Hauerwas's conception of the moral authority of the church in the following way: "[t]he church must take seriously the authority given it by the Holy Spirit if it is to save people from the tyranny of their own individual wills".[229] Given what we already know about Hauerwas's theological ethics, the authority that Cavanaugh speaks of is an ecclesial authority grounded in tradition and informed by narrative rather than the type of ecclesial authority exercised in ad hoc ways in order to make moral statements. As far as pentecostals and the ACC are concerned, the quality of their ethics

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[227] It is believed by some, particularly Wells, that the eschatological character of Hauerwas's work has been significantly underappreciated. For example, Michael Hanby describes how there is "a direct correlation between the eschatological horizon of Christian hope and the virtue of patience". Michael Hanby, review of *Transforming Fate into Destiny: The Theological Ethics of Stanley Hauerwas*, by Samuel Wells, *Theology Today* 62, no. 2 (2005): 282.

[228] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, x.

[229] Cavanaugh, "Stan the Man", 23.

according to this approach will rise and fall on the kinds of people they are producing, more so than perhaps the quality of the statements that they are creating.

The inclusion of the Holy Spirit above is notable, as it suggests the future development of a pneumatological ecclesiology that could resonate with pentecostalism. Indeed, Sterling, reflecting on pentecostal ethics, suggests that much of Hauerwas's dissatisfaction is with Christianity "trying to make a better world without Christians becoming better people [and by] rejecting the work of the Holy Spirit, Hauerwas believes that the Church is neglecting its primary resource".[230] Healy summarises the Hauerwasian perspective succinctly, emphasising not only the need for community in which ethics can take place, but that for ethics to be "Christian" the community must also be "Christian"; hence the need for the church:

> The individual Christian cannot do this alone, as we have seen. Formation is necessarily a communal phenomenon, so Christian formation can occur *only* within the church, where the language of faith is spoken and reflected in its forms of life and its practices […] ethics therefore requires community; and Christian ethics requires the church community. Thus we arrive at the center of Hauerwas's thinking, the church, the "community of character" for Christians.[231]

5.5 Conclusion: The Systematic Pillars of Hauerwasian Ethics

The analysis of Hauerwas's theological ethics, which consists of three primary pillars, narrative theology, virtue ethics, and separatist ecclesiology, has revealed how Hauerwas makes up for his rejection of "mainstream" approaches to Christian ethics. Specifically, he addresses the problems identified in chapter 4 including the myth of objectivity and the tendency of ethics to focus on crises, by demonstrating how narrative, character, and church reconstitute Christian ethics in an intellectually and practically sustainable way. In particular, the three pillars of his ethics resolve the challenges he highlights intelligibly and creatively.

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[230] Hauerwas and Wells, "Gift of the Church," 14. Quoted in Sterling, "Pentecostal Ethic."

[231] Healy, *Hauerwas*, 29.

Firstly, his narrative ethics, or more specifically, restoring narrative as a central component of Christian ethics, does not dispense with the realities of quandaries or crisis decisions, but reminds his readers that seeking objective universals in the manner of "mainstream" ethics ignores the profound role of "story" in shaping the moral world of communities who face the quandaries in question. Furthermore, narrative ethics, and more broadly narrative theology, underscores the truism that moral agents are all a product of their narrative environments and therefore ethics that claims or pursues objectivity in an absolute sense provides only the illusion of impartiality and, simultaneously, it censors the narrative assumptions that are at play. Hauerwas's arguments do not simply provide a critique of assumed objectivity but propose how the subjective reality can be embraced with integrity, that is, with a full acknowledgement of the moral narrative and the desire to live truthfully, according to that story.

Secondly, his virtue ethics reminds us that the appearance of a quandary is almost always character-dependent in that what some consider a quandary or crisis others may not. A moral agent is always fundamental to a moral quandary. Additionally, he marries narrative and virtue in a reciprocal relationship in such a way as to underscore the centrality of narrative and virtue to the moral landscape as well as their co-dependence. Given that he demonstrates the pre-eminence of both dimensions, as well as their coexistence, he successfully debunks what he terms the "standard account", given it rarely invokes narrative or virtue and is generally guided by secondary questions of principles and consequences. Hauerwas's critique of the "standard account" is complemented by a more foundational approach to ethics that does not disregard the importance of principles and consequences but insists on their embeddedness within a more determinative framework. The "standard account" is not just problematic on the basis that it does not recognise its narrative origins, but, as Hauerwas has identified, its narrative origins are not "good" narratives, nor are they in any way "Christian". The focus on narrative and virtue as primary factors in ethics from which other moral foci arise also has the additional benefit of making sense of human beings as fundamentally narrative creatures by virtue of their storytelling. Hauerwas's account not only has methodological integrity, but it also has the bonus of reflecting the way the moral life is lived out.

Thirdly, and finally, his ecclesiology functions in a primary sense to safeguard the distinctiveness of Christian ethics. One of his primary contentions is that the infiltration

of "secular liberalism" into the church has distorted the enterprise. A church institution which imports secular rationalities undermines the integrity of the church's identity, impacting the church's practice. His ecclesiology requires that the church maintain a separation from the world, not only in its community structures and relationships—key subject matter in systematic ecclesiology—but also in its intellectual and theological life. His solution to the distortions created by the blending of secular liberal rationalities with Christianity is to insist on its separateness, so that the church can recall and restore the narratives and theology that supplies its distinction. Only then can the church become the community of character that sustains the narrative and fosters the virtues commensurate with the Christian faith and the moral life embodied by its followers.

It is possible, therefore, to recognise that Hauerwas's commanding critique of Christian ethics, though placing him outside of the mainstream, is partnered with an equally powerful alternative that neutralises the challenges he cites, and it sustains, and in some ways restores, a distinctly Christian approach. And while the dimensions he insists on may not dominate contemporary Christian ethics discourse, the criticism is offset by his positing a visionary ideal of what should and could be. The constitutive components of his alternative proposal signal some substantial cross-over and potential for a pentecostal ethics dialogue which will be thoroughly explored in chapter 6.

While Hauerwas has invoked his own hermeneutic of suspicion and clearly defined the issues with traditional Christian ethics from his vantage point, chapter 5 has detailed his constructive response. He has supplied an alternative that mitigates the problems he perceives. Though his corpus is broad, I have explored his two key methodological contributions to theological ethics—narrative and virtue, and the practical contribution is his theology of the church. This chapter has outlined his major proposals including narrative as the source of moral intelligibility and mediator of the virtues, the emergence of virtues from the Christian story, and the responsibility and role of the church to nurture and develop character in its members and the community in which the narrative is carried. Given these foci, chapter 6 will argue how Stanley Hauerwas's ethics specifically resonate with the pentecostal ethics established in chapters 1 to 3, and not only maps onto the pentecostal characteristics, but provides a systematic foundation that can explain and legitimise a pentecostal approach to ethics.

Part IV of this thesis integrates the findings from the previous chapters to propose a pentecostal approach to ethics. This will be done in light of the challenges and pitfalls observed in Part I, the rationalities and characteristics described in Part II, and the rejection of "mainstream" Christian ethics and a constructive systematic replacement proposed by Stanley Hauerwas in Part III. A pentecostal approach to ethics will be argued by demonstrating continuity between each pentecostal characteristic and its Hauerwasian counterpart, and additionally, by showing how Stanley Hauerwas's theological ethics prevents the characteristics from existing disparately and in isolation from one another, but instead holds them together in an intelligible frame.

CHAPTER 6
A SYSTEMATIC FRAME FOR UNDERSTANDING
AND ARTICULATING PENTECOSTAL ETHICS

6.1 Introduction: Pentecostal Characteristics in Light of Hauerwas

This thesis has demonstrated several important claims. Firstly chapter 1 applied a hermeneutic of suspicion and described the various moral histories that gave rise to current trends in pentecostal ethics and concluded that a systematic structure and orderly approach was difficult to establish. This was partially due to the competing moral traditions that characterised the movement's historiography and its decentralised organisation and leadership structure. The claim regarding these apparent challenges in pentecostal ethics was further clarified in chapter 2 through an analysis of a collection of positional statements on moral issues published by a particular pentecostal denomination, the Australian Christian Churches (ACC). These documents also indicated that the ACC's pentecostal ethics appears disorganised and seems to fail to follow a consistent approach to ethical reasoning.

Given there was difficulty reconciling pentecostal ethics in practice with a consistent approach to Christian ethics, chapter 3 applied a hermeneutic of generosity to explore the pentecostal theological academy for contributions toward theological ethics, attempting to illuminate potential common threads. This chapter concluded that while

pentecostalism did not appear to follow "the rules" of a particular established Christian ethics methodology, several characteristics emerged in the scholarship that revealed some patterns that were not immediately obvious. These included an emphasis on Scripture; holiness; the church; narrative spirituality; and creative, rather than uniform, approaches and responses to ethical issues.

Chapter 4 argued that Stanley Hauerwas's rejection of "mainstream" approaches to Christian ethics and his dissatisfaction with the establishment make him a suitable dialogue partner for pentecostal ethics. His rejection of "mainstream" approaches leads him to propose alternative methodologies that he claims facilitate and steer a more authentic and efficacious approach to Christian ethics. These methodologies were explored and analysed in chapter 5 and covered the critical components, including narrative ethics, virtue ethics, and separatist ecclesiology. Given that Hauerwas both rejects "mainstream" ethics and proposes an alternative, his ethics will now be considered in view of the five characteristics established in chapter 3. I argue that Hauerwas's work supplies a systematic (in the methodological sense) frame that can both explain and authenticate pentecostalism's approach to ethics. This will be approached by summarising the characteristics identified in chapter 3 and then considering each characteristic separately in light of Hauerwas's theological ethics.

6.2 The Characteristics of Pentecostal Ethics

The five characteristics described in chapter 3 began with an emphasis on scriptural authority. I argue that although there are undoubtedly challenges with various assumptions pertaining to the nature of biblical authority, the history, scholarship, and ACC documents consistently prioritise the Bible in their theology, ethics, and practice. The second characteristic that arose concerned the threads of a holiness orientation, and the importance of individual sanctification and community consecration. This characteristic emerged in the history of pentecostalism, particularly given its Methodist heritage, and in the repudiation of morally dubious behaviours in the form of holiness codes and lists of prohibited activities.

The expectations regarding community consecration are echoed and elaborated in the third characteristic: the tendency for pentecostal churches to adopt a separatist disposition. This tendency fosters a distinct community and establishes rules of

engagement with the secular sphere, creating a particular separatist ecclesiology. Though not all the ACC moral positions reinforce a "political separatism", these instances seem to be in the minority, and could represent fragments of the evangelical influence over and above the Methodist approach. An alternate view of neutralising this tension could simply be to hypothesise that two forms of separatism co-exist: on the one hand, the "social quietists" who desire isolation from the secular space, and on the other, a more adversarial model, which necessitates separation and distinction to facilitate appropriate opposition.

The fourth characteristic of pentecostal ethics is the premium placed on narrative spirituality, which subsequently bleeds into many aspects of faith and practice. These include spirituality, theology, hermeneutics, and epistemology. The significance of storytelling across the board instantiates narrative as an important dimension to pentecostal ethics.

The fifth and final characteristic identified in chapter 3 was a creative and eclectic methodology. The eclecticism is possibly generated by the rapid expansion of pentecostalism, and the absence of a systematic theological tradition and centralised leadership. Creativity in ethics is demonstrable in the ACC material but interestingly it is supported, at least in part, by the scholarship, indicating that their openness and creativity justify this plurality. I will now examine each characteristic in turn in light of Hauerwas's positive proposals to demonstrate that a Hauerwasian framework authenticates what appears to be a pentecostal approach to ethics.

6.2.1 Scripture Is the Narrative Basis for Community Holiness

Having demonstrated that Scripture plays a central theological and moral role for pentecostals, and that Hauerwas's narrative ethics is grounded on the biblical narrative and its embodiment in the church, I will now argue that Hauerwas's ethics and pentecostal ethics share this emphasis in a commensurate way. There are two issues to be clarified to demonstrate the union around this characteristic: firstly, the nature of scriptural authority, and secondly, how the biblical text is employed.

Regarding the nature of biblical authority, while the prominence of the biblical text in both Hauerwasian and pentecostal ethics is clear, the nature of the authority carried by the text is less so. The direct appeals to Scriptures in the ACC documentation indicate

that they sometimes perceive the Bible to be self-justifying in a similar way to mainstream conservative evangelicals.[1] Given the historiography in chapter 1, it is possible that evangelical influences may have pedalled pentecostal theology in a biblically literalist, or even fundamentalist, direction.[2] While evangelicalism has sustained a coherent and theologically robust approach to the Bible within its tradition, the threads of literalism without the corresponding theology can create the illusion that pentecostal ethics embodies a fundamentalist character. Nevertheless, it is important to note that although a fundamentalist style of morality can invoke Scripture deontologically, not all deontological ethics is fundamentalist in character. Additionally, the historiography revealed that pentecostal ethics has been more complex than an iteration of evangelical ethics, and furthermore it has not been subjected to the theological battle lines drawn up between the conservative and liberal theological establishments over biblical authority.

Similarly, Hauerwas's conception of scriptural authority is not dependent on fundamentalist or deontological frameworks, nor is it rooted in deep textual criticism.[3] As

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[1] The mistake being made by conservatives is the belief that the canon contains "its own self-justification". Blenkinsopp, *Prophecy and Canon*, 152. It is often assumed, incorrectly, that in moral discourse Christian conservatives tend to appeal to Scripture while those who identify more so as liberal appeal to reason. This misleading distinction, according to Hauerwas, has a twofold explanation: firstly, they both appeal to Scripture in their moral argumentation—both groups, ironically, implementing deontological approaches to ethics, that is, the Ten Commandments or the Sermon on the Mount. Secondly, their positions are pre-existing and formulated prior to their appeal to Scripture. Moral positions are therefore being "derived from non-scriptural sources". Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 57.

[2] In this instance I am employing "fundamentalist" in the adjectival sense as described in chapter 1.

[3] Deontology—"ethic of duty"—has been historically associated with the "oughtness" of a particular act, rather than "goodness". It is worth noting that Hauerwas does not make any clear distinctions between the two categories, but some of his critics do. Moreover, Frankena describes how some religious writers and philosophers "imply that there is only one moral quality an action can have and it matters not what vocabulary we use in assigning it". Frankena, "Conversations with Carney and Hauerwas," 50. He goes on to suggest that one of the areas where he and Hauerwas disagree is in the delineation between these categories. Hauerwas does not distinguish, whereas Frankena argues that "there are two favorable or positive moral qualities an action may have, moral goodness or virtuousness and moral rightness or oughtness, and it can have one of these without having the other, though it may have both and may be without either of them". Ibid. He is arguing for a distinction; Hauerwas does not appear to acknowledge this.

discussed in chapter 4, in Hauerwas's view, biblical authority is narratively grounded and he rejects the idea that biblical authority is derived from "inspiration".[4] Nevertheless, when Hauerwas is expressing his theological and ethical ideas, he approaches them, Sarisky writes, "through—and not apart from—scriptural narrative".[5] Hauerwas argues that Scripture has authority "because it is the irreplaceable source of the stories that train us to be a faithful people".[6] In order to clarify his claims, Hauerwas appeals to Joseph Blenkinsopp's proposals regarding canon and tradition in "relation to prophecy and a community sufficient to sustain prophecy".[7] Hauerwas contends that:

> the position developed here does help us better comprehend the more straightforwardly moral portions of scripture. It keeps us from turning commands found there into isolated rules or principles that are assumed to have special status because they are in the Bible. Rather it proposes that Christians (and we hope others) take them to heart (and mind) because they have been found to be crucial to a people formed by the story of God. Such commands stand as reminders of the kind of people we must be if we are to be capable of remembering for ourselves and the world the story of God's dealing with us.[8]

Hauerwas's proposal provides a welcome clarification of biblical authority that could very well resonate with the pentecostal tradition, given the strength of its narrative spirituality. While the ACC documents reveal several occasions where the Bible is invoked in a somewhat legalistic and ad hoc fashion, contemporary pentecostal scholarship,

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[4] Hauerwas rejects outright that the "authority of scripture is dependent upon its being uniquely inspired by God". Healy, *Hauerwas*, 57.

[5] Sarisky, *Scriptural Interpretation*, 146–47.

[6] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 70. "To remember, we require not only historical critical skills, but examples of people whose lives have been formed by that memory." Ibid.

[7] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 53. See Blenkinsopp, *Prophecy and Canon*, 152.

[8] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 70. He is dealing here with "why" the Bible is important in ethics: it has historically framed a community, not because it is "inspired".

including that of James Smith and Murray Dempster, demonstrates a more creative approach to Scripture, reflecting a narrative authority rather than a deontological one.

Pertaining to the second issue—how the Bible functions—Healy provides some insight into, as well as some challenges to, Hauerwas's view. For example, he argues that Hauerwas's view of the "function" of Scripture is as follows: "1) The primary function of Scripture is to form and maintain the church; and 2) the church is the only place where Scripture can be read well".[9] On the Bible's role in ecclesial formation, given its centrality in all dimensions of pentecostal life, Hauerwas's position is likely to reinforce their scriptural emphasis rather than detract from it. The second assertion, that the church is the "only" place to read Scripture well, may require slightly more nuance given that the Spirit is at work beyond the boundaries of the church. In the pentecostal worldview all aspects of life, in Smith's words, are "enchanted".[10] On what basis, therefore, would God's ability to speak or his people's ability to listen be restricted by institutional parameters? Healy elaborates the sociological challenge: that "The rejection of both a 'right' to an individual reading and something like an objective and fairly accessible meaning lying in the text is made so strongly that it may have enclosed Scripture inside the circle formed by the church, just a bit too much 'the church's book', and too much under the church's control".[11] In Hauerwas's view, the church community becomes Scripture's most important moderator.

While drawing hermeneutical boundaries in such a way might come across as counterintuitive for pentecostals, it may just be what they need to align their practice

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[9] Healy, *Hauerwas*, 59. "On this basis, Hauerwas rejects what is often understood (whether correctly or not) to be a Reformation principle, namely the idea that each Christian [has the right] to interpret the Bible." Ibid., 59–60. The actual answer to this of course lies in an exploration of the purpose behind reading the Bible, and whether the terms by which this discussion is taking place are all defined and understood by those having the discussion. For example, Healy reminds us that the right that one has to read the Bible does not mean that one has the right to misinterpret it, and he suggests that Hauerwas misunderstands the attendant Reformation position. He also claims that one's "misreading may well be better for us than if we do not read it at all [and potentially] incline solitary readers to listen more carefully and intelligently to the Sunday sermon and readings". Ibid., 61–62.

[10] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 39.

[11] Healy, *Hauerwas*, 59–60.

within an actual pentecostal framework such as Land's Spirit, Scripture, and Community, with the church community acting as a necessary check on both the interpretation and application of Scripture. This approach is more palatable for both individuals and churches of the pentecostal ilk, as opposed to more rigid strategies employed elsewhere, such as an exegetical litmus test. Indeed, Hauerwas does not provide much clarity regarding the utility of exegesis for moral deliberation, but Reno offers some insight: "Concepts are not 'clarified'; they are weighted with exegetical reflection that, however inconclusive and complex, is not easily taken captive by rival, extra-Christian interpretations".[12] In my estimation, exegesis can function to locate the text deep in the narrative, ensuring the story remains grounded in the historical community rather than being hijacked by those who might usurp it, but this may prove to be a second-order concern given that community endorsement likely takes first place in this particular characteristic.

In conclusion, it is possible to assert that pentecostal ethics and Hauerwasian ethics are both thoroughly biblical. Additionally, it appears that there is also commonality to be found in both the authority of the Bible and the way in which its authority is deployed. Therefore, regarding Scripture, its nature, and authority, Hauerwas and pentecostals have more in common than initially had been obvious. Specifically, Hauerwas's insistence that the narrative supplies both the meaning and the authority to biblical ethics articulates a position that pentecostals could intuitively subscribe to. By making "story", or narrative, determinative for Christian ethics, he simultaneously removes biblical absolutism's monopoly while sustaining the Bible's absolute primacy in theological ethics. The Bible becomes the fulcrum that links theology on the one hand and social ethics on the other, given that it testifies to a community that is morally and socially shaped by its narrative. Moreover, Hauerwas insists that the New Testament communicates a symbolic (as well as historic) world, which resonates with pentecostal understandings of how important it is to perceive the world correctly.[13] The moral authority of the Bible goes beyond being "instructive", given that its authority envelops the whole world in which all moral actions take place. From both the Hauerwasian and pentecostal vantage points, "the primary function of Scripture is to shape our vision", so

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[12] Reno, "Stanley Hauerwas," 307.

[13] Hays, *Moral Vision of the New Testament*, 262.

that we may see the world correctly and understand the character of the God responsible for it.[14]

6.2.2 Holiness Is the Personal Narrative of Virtue Developed in the Church

The second trend that arises in pentecostal ethics but also constitutes a critical pillar in Hauerwas's ethics is virtue, including character formation and holiness. Hauerwas highlights several denominations including the Calvinist, Anabaptist, and Anglican traditions (the latter two of which he has belonged to) as examples of ecclesiastical traditions whose theological sensibilities have created a context in which holiness prominently features.[15] Nevertheless, the connection between Hauerwas and pentecostalism through the holiness prism is more pronounced. In light of Hauerwas's Methodist heritage, Stout writes that "one constant in his thinking from the beginning has been his own tradition's emphasis on the power of the Holy Spirit to transform the life of the believer".[16] The following paragraphs will briefly attest to the theological connection through Methodism, the practical distinction that arises through spirituality on the one hand and liturgy on the other, and conclude with the pneumatological dimension that unifies Hauerwasian and pentecostal holiness.

Pentecostalism's historical relationship to Methodism and the holiness movement was summarised in chapter 1. Examples of this heritage include the emphasis on sanctification (culminating in Spirit Baptism), and the desire for pentecostals to embody a consecrated community committed to live "in" but not "of" the world. Hauerwas, similarly, puts a premium on character formation and holy living, with a view to producing

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[14] Ibid.

[15] Interestingly, he argues that while these produce moral reflection intended to influence the Christian conscience, they have failed to produce moral theology or a discipline capable of cultivating such discourse. That, he states, has been dominated by Catholicism. Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 52.

[16] Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, 140. Hauerwas's view of historical Methodism is quite sober. Writing of the Methodist practitioners he notes that they "were labelled by the many in the Church of England as 'enthusiasts.' That was not a compliment; an enthusiast was thought to have a dangerously emotional, non-intellectual understanding of the faith." Stanley Hauerwas, "Character Convergence: The Prospect of Holy Living," in *The Holy Spirit and Christian Formation: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Diane J. Chandler (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 206.

this type of virtuous community. As Stout writes, "For the Methodist Hauerwas, Christian ethics is perfectionist. It is mainly about what kind of people Christians are called to be, not about what one ought to do".[17] Although some of the language employed by pentecostals on the one hand, and by Hauerwas on the other, can vary, the general ideas are commensurate and seem to refer to the same stripe of ethical living.

Daniel Castelo, a Methodist scholar, notes that virtue theory, as a philosophy, "has not been pursued significantly by Pentecostals, […] it represents another model that especially attends to the 'from below' aspects of kingdom living". In his work, which argues for a similar "from below" approach to pentecostal ethics, he suggests that "affections and virtues will be employed as frameworks by which to concretize conceptually the dialectic of abiding and waiting".[18] He argues that these proclivities should form part of the pentecostal ethical story. Similar arguments are found throughout Hauerwas's work, including the promotion of dispositions such as patience, gentleness, hope, and of course, peace.[19]

A "from below" approach, whether a formalised virtue framework, or informal approaches to dispositions, is not the approach that the ACC have taken. Nevertheless, in pentecostalism more generally there is a receptivity to affections and virtues in both theory and practice.[20] Steven Land describes this as "orthopathy"—"the affections which motivate the heart and characterize the believer […] Affections are neither episodic, feeling states nor individualistic sentiments […] Unlike 'feelings' these affections are distinctively shaped and determined by the biblical story and evidence the marks of particular communal and historical locations".[21] This indicates that what Hauerwas is proposing and the way some pentecostal scholars think about such matters are similar, despite the latter employing slightly different descriptive language. Methodism therefore

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[17] Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, 141.

[18] Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics*, 7. Abiding and waiting is not to be confused with "doing nothing". Doerksen describes Christian moral patience as "something quite specific and fully active even when it takes on the particular practice of waiting". Doerksen, "Politics of Moral Patience," 457.

[19] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 166; Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, x; Vanier and Hauerwas, *Living Gently*, 54–59.

[20] See, for example, Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 41.

[21] Ibid., 44.

seems to supply a strong theological and historical connection between Hauerwas and pentecostalism that makes sense of the shared holiness orientation as well as the proclivity to emphasise "from below" aspects of ethical rationalities. There is however a point of contention—the preferred catalysts of character formation.

Although there is more commonality than distinction, pentecostals, at least historically, have undergone personal transformation by pursuing virtue through "sanctification", and its derivative spirituality and experiences. Hauerwas, on the other hand, emphasises formal church practices (including the sacraments and liturgy) as conduits of character formation. This divergence needs to be addressed (or accounted for), given that Jeffrey Lamp (and others) argue that pentecostalism has an anti-creedal bias that may reject by default liturgical propositions that in the Hauerwasian world form the basis of Christian character development.[22] However, pentecostalism's anti-creedal bias is only relevant if "anti-creedal" is to be understood as a totalising rejection of liturgy and church practice, which clearly pentecostalism does not. Indeed, central pentecostal practices include prayer for the sick, Spirit Baptism, ecstatic worship experiences, the practice of spiritual gifts, as well as believers' baptism, and communion.[23] The divergence therefore is not that pentecostals lack church practices in comparison to other traditions; it is just that, perhaps in order to be "spirit-led", the pentecostal liturgical repertoire is different from other bodies of liturgy: it is less formal and rigid, and, in some cases, more diverse.

On the assumption that Hauerwas's methodology for liturgy-based character formation can be applied in a pentecostal context, I will briefly attend to his argument. Werpehowski lists the range of ecclesial practices that contribute toward character development in the Hauerwasian world. These include: "resolving disputes among the faithful, preaching, hearing the Word of God, baptism, and Eucharist".[24] Moreover

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[22] Lamp, "Spirit and the Story," 13; Yong, *Spirit, Word, Community*, 273.

[23] For further discussion of pentecostal liturgy and practices see Wolfgang Vondey, "Pentecostal Sacramentality and the Theology of the Altar," in *Scripting Pentecost: A Study of Pentecostals, Worship and Liturgy*, ed. Mark J. Cartledge and A. J. Swoboda (New York: Routledge, 2016), 94–107; Chris E. W. Green, "Saving Liturgy: (Re)Imagining Pentecostal Liturgical Theology and Practice," in Cartledge and Swoboda, *Scripting Pentecost*, 108–18.

[24] Werpehowski, "Talking the Walk," 235.

Hauerwas and Wells seek to abolish the dichotomies that have been established between worship and ethics by demonstrating a causal connection, or, in the absence of one, at least a formative connection.[25] For example, baptism informs ethics in the following way—the Christian is called "to give up any sense that they own their bodies. So the notion of private makes no sense".[26] Furthermore, regarding the Eucharist (or communion—the pentecostal equivalent), Hauerwas and Wells suggest that it promotes companionship: "Disciples gather and greet; are reconciled with God and one another; hear and share their common story; offer their needs and resources; remember Jesus and invite his Spirit; and then share communion, before being sent out".[27] As for worship, "It is the most regular way in which most Christians remind themselves and others that they are Christians. It is the most significant way in which Christianity takes flesh, evolving from a set of ideas and convictions to a set of practices and a way of life".[28] For Hauerwas and Wells, this is what worship is and does: in making God the subject of worship, it lays the foundation, it is the necessary pre-condition for Christian ethics.[29]

In the Hauerwasian world, these ecclesial practices, among others, are the scaffolding of Christian virtue ethics. Hauerwas and Wells criticise contemporary Christian ethics for attempting to enforce Christian behaviour without appealing to moral resources (or traditions) such as these. They argue that through the practices a people are formed who embody what it means to be Christian, because they remind the participants who they are and what is required of them. The church practices teach and encourage dispositions that form character, evolving into a way of life that is becoming of Christians: "people [of God], disciples, witnesses".[30]

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[25] Hauerwas and Wells explore "worship" as one such practice that is intimately linked with ethics. Hauerwas and Wells, *Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics*, 4–6. Healy also notes that much of Hauerwas's agenda is orientated around destabilising these unhelpful dichotomies. Healy, *Hauerwas*, 20.

[26] Hauerwas and Wells, *Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics*, 6.

[27] Ibid., 13.

[28] Ibid., 7.

[29] Similarly, Reno suggests that attending "the Eucharist week after week is more like laying a durable foundation for a house than it is like attending weekly lectures". Reno, "Stanley Hauerwas," 303.

[30] Hauerwas and Wells, *Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics*, 13.

From a pentecostal perspective, Castelo argues that change is embodied, and that spirituality (and its attendant practices) serves as a catalyst for such adjustments. "Undeniably, some with time return to their old ways after these moments, but others experience a significant turnaround. […] If one assesses Pentecostal testimonies […] the nature of the transformation and its related outcomes often bridges the gap between spirituality and ethics."[31] Another way to frame this proposal is to say that pentecostal spirituality expands the pool of practices that can lead to the personal and communal character transformation espoused by Hauerwas. These practices can include spontaneous song, prayer, the exercising of spiritual gifts, or Spirit Baptism. By the same token, pentecostals could look beyond their traditional practices and view the mainstream church traditions Hauerwas describes as practices that are catalytic of spiritual transformation. Furthermore, their "enchanted theology of creation" and "narrative/experiential epistemology" can lead to many more opportunities within the pentecostal world for character formation. These practices do not replace those that Hauerwas describes but expands upon them. Consistent with pentecostalism's own theology and practice, these ecclesial habits are orientated toward an individual transformation toward holiness. Given the synergy on this matter between Hauerwas and pentecostals, it is appropriate to conclude that Hauerwas's theological ethics legitimise liturgically driven character formation, while pentecostalism enriches it by expanding the volume and diversity of practices.

Finally, regarding the pneumatological dimensions of holiness, in some respects, pentecostalism is experience-orientated and Hauerwas sacrament-orientated. Nevertheless, it does not necessarily follow that these distinctions need to be truncated to demonstrate unity. Moreover, many pentecostal practices have a sacramental nature, and concurrently experience is central to sacramental practice in the Hauerwasian framework. Placing the definitional and semantic issues to one side, a uniform liturgy is not a prerequisite for efficacious Hauerwasian character formation. For example, it does not require that Hauerwas and pentecostals adopt (or should adopt) the same liturgical repertoire. In other words, they do not need to look identical. Both pentecostals and

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[31] Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics*, 10. "Some are slain in the Spirit and others are delivered from substance abuse; some speak in tongues, and others stop beating their spouses." Ibid.

Hauerwas desire the same outcome from a pneumatologically grounded ethic: "Christian ethics must display how the Holy Spirit makes a difference for Christian living".[32]

While "faithful practice" seems to be high on Hauerwas's agenda, it is the Holy Spirit that yields strength for renewal and resilience for holiness.[33] This spirituality is where Hauerwas and pentecostals seem to align, as Hauerwas and Wells describe: "through the ministry of the Holy Spirit what would otherwise be words, stories, ideas become practices, habits, patterns of action. The Holy Spirit teaches God's people and thus makes followers into disciples".[34] The role of the Holy Spirit in terms of shaping the believer is intensified in both the pentecostal and Hauerwasian worldviews. Hauerwas and Wells argue that "the Holy Spirit trains God's people to recognize God's hand at work, shapes the ways in which they reflect God's character, and empowers them to express that character in the world".[35] Firstly, "through the Holy Spirit we are made participants in another world [...] The Holy Spirit validates that God is closer than we are to ourselves. Not only is this true but by the grace of God, we are transformed to be witnesses".[36] One might describe this training as illuminating the ways in which God is at work in the world, as well as in the church—a type of enchanted worldview.

In conclusion, where Methodism connects Hauerwas and pentecostalism in theory, the Holy Spirit connects them in practice. In this regard, the role of the Holy Spirit in Hauerwasian ethics and pentecostal ethics is twofold: catalytic in the short term and formational in the long term. Firstly, it is the work of the Holy Spirit "in the church" that makes holiness possible, and secondly, holiness manifests in the church as friendship between otherwise disparate people who are guided in their relationships by the "Spirit of Truth", "To be held accountable and to hold others accountable".[37] To inculcate the former without the latter risks, as Hauerwas describes, legalism, acknowledging that one

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[32] Hauerwas, "Character Convergence," 209.

[33] Hauerwas and Wells, *Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics*, 16.

[34] Ibid., 17. The migration of sanctification from the realm of holiness (ethics) to spirituality (practice) is "fraught with difficulties [as] we no longer have to think about ethics as if God matters in human behavior". Hauerwas, "Character Convergence," 208.

[35] Hauerwas and Wells, *Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics*, 18.

[36] Hauerwas, "Character Convergence," 208.

[37] Ibid., 214.

must strive for holiness, particularly the themes outlined in the biblical text, notwithstanding that one is completely reliant on the Holy Spirit for the capacity to engage this pursuit.[38] The manifestation of "friendship" in the church, serves as a type of moderation. The immediate impact of the work of the Spirit facilitates holiness as a pursuit and, moreover, it continues to shape the believer in such a way that goes beyond codifying holiness but instantiates a community that becomes the bearer of holiness.

6.2.3 The Church Is Separate from and a Part of the World

Chapter 5 explored Hauerwas's ecclesiology and its interdependence with the narrative and virtue components of his theological ethics. Chapter 3 recognised that pentecostalism's ecclesiology, identifiable more from its practice than perhaps its established doctrine, presents as separatist in a pragmatic sense. Hauerwas's theologically separatist view of the church indicates that the two may have some commonality. The following paragraphs will briefly note the distinct understandings of "separation" intrinsic to Hauerwasian and pentecostal ecclesiologies. I will then consider the challenges that emerge in pentecostal ecclesiology, including how the pentecostal "silence" on ethical issues can be perceived and the proliferation of positions derived from a strong hermeneutical dependence on experience. I will conclude with how Hauerwasian ecclesiology moderates these challenges and can strengthen the ecclesiological dimension of pentecostal ethics.

The key difference between a pentecostal ecclesiology and a Hauerwasian ecclesiology is that the former seems to be tied to spirituality and practice, and the latter is derived theologically (and somewhat politically). For example, pentecostalism can hold an "enchanted" view of the world, to the extent that a separation is required to keep the church spiritually quarantined from potential compromise—keeping the "spirit of the world" at arm's length. Hauerwas's concern, like pentecostalism, seems to be compromise, but more along sociological and philosophical grounds; he calls the church to "be a parochial people" in order to "be saved from the temptations to serve the universal ideologies of the empire".[39] His concern relates to secular ideologies, and their

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[38] Ibid., 215.

[39] Brock and Hauerwas, *Beginnings*, 97.

attendant narratives, cross-pollinating with the Christian narrative and habituating in the church. This infiltration of "liberalism" into the church has the effect of distorting the authentic narratives from which the church's social ethics is derived. On this, both the pentecostal rationale, from those described earlier such as Dempster and Augustine, and the Hauerwasian rationale, are almost identical.

Pentecostalism's pragmatic orientation has also served to minimise theoretical engagement to the degree that pronouncements regarding moral issues are not prioritised. The minimal public engagement establishes the perception that pentecostal churches are separate from the world at least in theory, if not in practice. If there is no interest in this type of engagement, on what basis would the pentecostal churches participate in public ethics? Clearly this silence is a tenuous position that has come at a historical cost. As Larsen reflects, "the evangelical leaders that I had once trusted appealed to 'moderation' or 'political neutrality' either to support the war or to justify their silence".[40] This example points to a reality that being "separate" can easily align oneself to one side or another, despite the desire to quarantine the church from taking positions that could distort its neutrality on contentious public issues.

There is a more important vulnerability here though: the combination of pentecostal pragmatism and their experience orientation renders pentecostal ethical practice vulnerable to infinite proliferation. Indeed, the hermeneutical role of experience is an area of divergence between Hauerwas and pentecostals. Whereas pentecostals place a high premium on individualised experience, according to Hays, the Hauerwasian view considers individual experiences "a matter of small importance". Hays explains Hauerwas's position, that "it is the experience of the church through time that carries hermeneutical weight".[41] This clarification effectively dissolves the Wesleyan distinction between tradition and experience, but in so doing it beckons pentecostalism back into its tradition to call the experiences to historical account. This initiates a conversation regarding how Hauerwas's ecclesiology might mitigate these challenges and simultaneously strengthen pentecostal ecclesiology and sustain pentecostal separatism.

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[40] Larsen, "How I Think Hauerwas Thinks," 21.

[41] Hays, *Moral Vision of the New Testament*, 264.

The intense pragmatism is a theme more difficult to unify with Hauerwas's ecclesiological critique, summarised above, which does not immediately focus on practical responses. A deeper exploration of his social ethics, however, reveals that practical ways of "being" and responsiveness are exactly what Hauerwas expects to emerge from his narrative ethics.[42] Additionally, I have noted how some pentecostal churches historically chose to remain silent on some ethical issues for fear of too much worldly engagement. Hauerwas, in contrast, can be vocal and forthright, with no concern about being perceived as too secular or controversial. His ecclesiology may however provide a bastion against this danger, given how separate he insists the church should be to steward its own narrative responsibly. The solution is therefore that pentecostal separatism must be sustained, but not because of fear or political expediency but on the grounds of a strong self-understanding and institutional identity. Consequently, there is an integrity made possible through separation that can produce some robust, "Christian" repudiations of the world.

It is here that Hauerwas's ethics, again, provides some theory that could undergird a pentecostal "way of being" that can strengthen the pre-existing practices and sentiments. Not only could his separatist ecclesiology provide a theological rationale for pentecostal practice, it could also supply some certainty around the tendencies currently entertained, as well as some fortitude regarding the convictions that pentecostals may have around particular moral issues. The ability to hold to convictions is important, because, as Hauerwas writes: "the first social ethical task of the church is to be the church" and the church cannot be the church if it is disregarding its own rationality in favour of an alternative secular worldview, even if it is done with the best intentions to enhance public engagement.[43] The classic pentecostal scepticism of the world is therefore well placed; Hauerwas simply gives further reasons to be suspicious of any narrative that does not appear to belong in the church.

In conclusion, it seems to be the individual pursuit of holiness, commensurate with Hauerwas's virtue ethics and pentecostal historical practices, that when collectivised,

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[42] For example, across his corpus he specifically addresses abortion, euthanasia, sex, marriage, disability, war, homosexuality—and other issues.

[43] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 99.

characterises the church community. Moreover, Sarisky notes a connection between this proposition and Scripture, as "Those who accede to the demands the biblical text makes on them, and enter into its symbolic worlds, constitute the church".[44] When this "way of being" multiplies in the context of the church, it is then that the church becomes a social force to be reckoned with, strong enough to make an impact, and bold enough to hold fast to its identity.

6.2.4 Narrative Is How Pentecostals Give an Account of Themselves, Their Behaviour, and Their Community

Chapter 3 argued that pentecostalism is, at its heart, a narrative movement. Chapter 5 likewise described how Stanley Hauerwas's theological ethics is characterised primarily by "narrative". Given this foundational connection, Hauerwas's work will likely legitimise pentecostalism's comfort with narrative, and contribute some clarity and caution regarding how it may be employed in pentecostal ethics.

Pentecostal theologian Kenneth Archer's contribution to narrative hermeneutics have already been cited, but he also provides some additional insights that will orientate pentecostal ethics around Hauerwas's theology. These insights primarily emerge from Archer's employment of the ethics of virtue and tradition of Alasdair MacIntyre, whose work is instrumental for Hauerwas's ethics of virtue and tradition. The primary intersection Archer identifies is that "all moral reasoning takes place from within a particular narrative tradition. The narrative tradition provides the context in which moral reason, along with its interpretive practices, can be understood".[45] Additionally, all moral events arise within a tradition (secular, sacred and everything in between) and consequently moral reasoning in almost every respect is a separate, second-order activity entirely dependent on narrative for its intelligibility. MacIntyre describes morality's

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[44] Sarisky, *Scriptural Interpretation*, 190.

[45] Archer, "Pentecostal Story," 40. See MacIntyre, *After Virtue*. MacIntyre not only insists on the narrative realities, but also on the agent's reality within the narrative. "The moral philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre responds to this distinctively modern man of universal reason." Larsen, "How I Think Hauerwas Thinks," 23. Given that this "modern man" is "a particular, contingent, time-bound creature", MacIntyre writes that the "rational and rationally justified autonomous moral subject of the eighteenth century [is] a fiction, an illusion". MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 114. See also Larsen, "How I Think Hauerwas Thinks," 24.

reliance on narrative in the following way: "I can only answer the question 'what am I to do?' if I can answer the prior question, 'of what story or stories do I find myself a part?'"[46] We find this particular category of question absent from pentecostal ethics such as that of the ACC, and it is therefore reasonable to suggest that if narrative theology is critical to understanding pentecostalism, then questions such as this should form part of pentecostal moral discourse.[47] Herein lies the gap in which Hauerwas could provide some insight, and clearly Archer's invocation of MacIntyre, the inclusion of whom is not defended, demonstrates that the pentecostal academy is quite comfortable to integrate other traditions to illuminate their own, and moreover to draw from them should they supply theoretical legitimisation.

While pentecostals may not consider narrative ethics as codified theoretical concepts, given that narrative spirituality, hermeneutics, and epistemology undergirds the pentecostal worldview, they possess the intellectual raw materials requisite for comprehending Hauerwas's proposals. Considering narrative's intuitive integration, as opposed to its systematic integration, the appropriate expectations of pentecostal narrative ethics ought to be continual assessment of the moral landscape through the eyes of the pentecostal narrative worldview, as opposed to compilation of a compendium of systematic moral theology informed by narrative. An important caveat to be clarified recognises that often the pentecostal narrative, on a macro level, testifies to the cosmic and diverse work of the Spirit, a cornerstone of the enchanted worldview that understates the degree to which secular forces can be understood apart from their spiritual dimension. This pneumatological understanding is of course supported by much of the

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[46] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 216. This necessarily demands that these virtues be negotiated in a community. Castelo assesses MacIntyre's view from a pentecostal perspective: "First, MacIntyre's notion is a collective vision: Practices, in his view, cannot be undertaken alone. The logic extends to abiding and waiting within Christian embodiment: They are practice-orientations that can lead to any number of specific practices that are necessarily undertaken in fellowship". Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics*, 30.

[47] It is probably worth noting at this point that some commentators also find Hauerwas's conception of "story" far too generalised—for example, "He uses this category to speak of autobiography, short story, novel, parable, the story of a people (which presumably would include historical recollections, legends, hero stories, tall tales, and the like)". Ogletree, "Character and Narrative," 28. It seems that all this does is fuel his critic's concerns.

academic literature in chapter 3, particularly the work of Wariboko, who remains committed to an ethical methodology grounded on the principle of open-ended creativity.

While the openness, and indeed experience-orientated spirituality, can border on an "anything goes relativism", a vulnerability considered earlier, there exists a historical precedent for integrating a more formal understanding of narrative. In the spirit of pentecostalism's history, which grafted in eclectic theological traditions and sensibilities, Hauerwas's approach to ethics could potentially provide some stability and legitimacy to the perceptually fluid pentecostal method.[48] The irony here is that the perception of stability and legitimacy is likely more necessary for pentecostalism's sceptics, more than pentecostals themselves. Pentecostal narrative traditions are so strongly embedded in their practice, there is little perceived internal need to exemplify them systematically. Given the proposal that Hauerwas and pentecostals share some mutuality with respect to theological method seems reasonable, it should be made explicit that Hauerwas himself does not suggest that narrative theology is either all-sufficient or perfect but notes that its role is limited.[49] Nevertheless, the implicit commonality between his approach and that of pentecostal ethicists makes Hauerwas a worthy dialogue partner, and contributor, to be seriously considered.

In terms of how this intersection provides a systematic frame for understanding pentecostal ethics, the first step is to recognise that the narrative tradition informs all aspects of pentecostal life, including its approach to morality. The second step is to notice that the integration of narrative is more intuitive than systematic. Indeed, Hauerwas says that some of the best ethical "casuists" "may not even be those who manifest the strongest rational skills. Those with intuitive gifts may simply 'know' better than they can say what the gospel requires of us".[50] This is a sure reminder that, as Hauerwas has

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[48] It is also worth noting that Hauerwas's Mennonite background might supply certain complementary sensibilities that are familiar to pentecostals—for example, Mennonites do not shy away from claims regarding the power and role of the Holy Spirit, they place a great emphasis on believers' baptism and empowerment for mission, and they are open to liturgical practices that can often also be found in pentecostal churches. Mennonite Church of the United States of America, "Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective," http://mennoniteusa.org/confession-of-faith/, articles 3, 11, 18.

[49] Hauerwas and Jones, *Why Narrative?*, 3.

[50] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 134.

argued, ethics rarely arises in the context of an ethical system that can tolerate its existential nature. Rather than identifying "minimal requirements for the Christian life […] the imaginative mode for the Christian community [locates] the innovative aspects of our convictions [given that] no one can anticipate what being formed virtuously may require".[51] The intuitive integration of narrative is also indicative of narrative's totalising influence regarding the way pentecostals read and interpret Scriptures, value holiness, and embody church community. This integration with the previous characteristics suggests that pentecostal ethics derives strength and sensibility from the intuitive assimilation of the moral pillars rather than their delineation and systematisation.

In conclusion, to impose a theoretical framework onto an intuitive reality may disestablish narrative's primacy and deconstruct pentecostal ethics in an unhelpful (and morally incognisant) direction. Moreover, to pursue a pentecostal moral creed as an absolute end would seem to me to be distinctly anti-Hauerwasian, particularly from an ecclesiological perspective, given that the first ethical task of the church is not to script a social ethic but to live one. Castelo argues that "with such integration being vital to Pentecostal identity, the question of ethics then is not simply an add-on to a catalogue of theological modes of inquiry; rather, theological ethics is very much at the heart of Pentecostal life precisely because of their emphases upon embodiment and performance. To modify Stanley Hauerwas's famous phrasing of the church more broadly, Pentecostals traditionally have not had a social ethic; rather, they have been one".[52]

6.2.5 Creativity Is Moderated by Narrative, Virtue, and Ecclesial Separateness

One of the strongest criticisms of pentecostal ethics arising from the hermeneutic of suspicion is the inconsistent rationales that are applied to different ethical issues and the ad hoc employment of moral methodologies. While a more generous examination of pentecostal ethics in chapter 3 indicated that an eclectic and creative approach to ethics might be positively construed, we will look to Hauerwas to establish a more systematic rationale or theoretical justification for this characteristic.

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[51] Hauerwas, "Casuistry in Context," 282.

[52] Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics*, 22; Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 22.

Before describing the synergy between pentecostalism and Hauerwas regarding creativity, it must be recognised that a creative use of sources is to be expected in pentecostalism on the grounds of "worldview". Pentecostal ethics is necessarily creative because creativity is derivative of a more foundational principle—an "enchanted" view of the world. For example, an enchanted view of the world, or a cosmic spirituality, necessarily means that any source could be "of God", providing that it is, in the moment, a vehicle of the Spirit. Nevertheless, "creativity" is not a foundational Hauerwasian ethics theme, but more so demonstrable "fruit" of his theological ethics. It is therefore necessary to explain how the creative usage of sources and methods in moral decision-making is consistent with Hauerwasian ethics.

The first explanation is the anti-systematic and decentralised nature of narrative itself, which is predisposed to creativity and at least makes possible a multiplicity of interpretations and responses. Chapter 5 critiqued Hauerwas's narrative ethics on the basis that it was too subjective an epistemology that consequently gives rise to relativism. Given this criticism was addressed methodologically, creative ethics, rather than holding a "lack of theological reflection" accountable in a totalising way, may just be an appropriate recognition of the diverse contexts and narrative accents within which ethics arises.

Brian Brock suggests to Hauerwas that "the complex Christian story both helps us to affirm diverse moments as parts of the one story, the work of one Spirit, who might also therefore be said to be the author of diverse but definitely shaped and mutually defining forms of life".[53] Brock cites marriage and singleness as examples of this diversity, but the principle could be extrapolated. Hauerwas concurs with this view and adds that in his own writing on the Holy Spirit he probably did not emphasise, or explore sufficiently, how "The Holy Spirit creates new alternatives that hadn't been there".[54] I am aware at this point that the initial criticism was made against "inconsistent ethical methodologies"

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[53] Brock and Hauerwas, *Beginnings*, 230–31.

[54] Ibid., 231. He is careful to clarify though that he does not want to propose that the Holy Spirit acts "only" in this way—in dramatic and extraordinary discontinuities with the past. The works he is referring to in this exchange are Hauerwas, "Character Convergence"; Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon, *The Holy Spirit* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2015).

rather than "inconsistent ethical circumstances", but it is unlikely that both Hauerwas and pentecostals are interested in submitting to a system for consistency's sake. Abiding by particular "rules of engagement" (that may or may not be narratively consistent) is secondary to identifying the most "authentically Christian" response in any given scenario, considering what the narrative requires of its people. A further example of Hauerwasian creativity discussed by Brock and Hauerwas is abortion in light of the annunciation. Brock notes that "there is no moral or hermeneutic principle"[55] guiding Hauerwas's application. Instead Hauerwas has made "a highly creative link that cannot be formalised".[56]

The second explanation is not mutually exclusive of the first. Where diverse narratives might give rise to diverse ways of perceiving moral challenges, diverse moral scenarios might demand an eclectic set of responses arising at the level of moral encounter—"beginning in the middle"—rather than a moral methodology.[57] This approach can account for multifarious variables and is commensurate with Vondey's positive rendering of pentecostal ambiguity regarding social ethics. Pentecostalism is not simply diverse, expanding and "open-ended", but subject to, as David Martin describes, "constant adjustment on the ground".[58] For example, scenarios A and B might share core similarities, but be distinct enough to warrant different responses. These responses may reflect divergent methodologies but may well be correct rejoinders based on criteria established not methodologically but theologically.

The third and final explanation, or maybe a moderator of the previous explanations, is that the ethical task is also beholden to the Spirit-led church community. A spirit-led church not only provides an environment for the creativity to take place, but also communal accountability—a Hauerwasian necessity. The Spirit-led church

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[55] Brock and Hauerwas, *Beginnings*, 136.

[56] Brock also cites this example as another instance where Hauerwas does not employ casuistry in the classical sense: "Let's look at all the different scenarios that might have occurred around a conception that have a bearing on our responsibility to carry it to term or not." Ibid.

[57] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 62.

[58] David Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 170. Quoted in Vondey, *Pentecostalism*, 109.

community practices church traditions and exercises spiritual gifts that illuminate, guide, correct, and further diversify the responses at play.

Given these three explanations, and that they reflect the existential pastoral reality, clearly creativity is to be accepted as both pentecostal and Hauerwasian, but not without qualification. If methodological consistency is not what holds Hauerwasian or pentecostal ethics together, then something else is required. Given this project so far, it seems to be the case that eclectic methodological and pastoral responses are acceptable, but they are not accountable to a singular methodological system of legitimisation. The pentecostal characteristics identified in chapter 3, when read in light of Hauerwas, can provide this legitimisation. Narrative, virtue, and community function to qualify the appropriate use of eclectic sources and methodologies that give rise to creative ethical outputs.

If a moral proposal fits with an "authentic" community-guided application of the biblical narrative in the pursuit of holiness, then a variety of possible approaches or outcomes may be acceptable within a given scenario. The prospective variety does not mean, however, that employing this strategy always produces a perfect outcome commensurate with an ideal pentecostal ethic. It may well produce dispositions, actions, or consequences inconsistent with the core narrative and its virtues, or fall short of an ideal. As Hauerwas indicates, retrospective judgement is the only type of judgement that can inform future ethical decisions, given everyone begins "in the middle" of the story.[59] The work of Paul Alexander, covered in the earlier chapters, testifies to this very reality; it describes how the pentecostal communities in the United States wrestled with their position on warfare amid competing priorities and contested applications of virtues such as peacemaking.

If creativity is both a central feature of narrative ethics and a recognition of the reality of the moral life, then it qualifies Stanley Hauerwas's discomfort with the "standard account", the pursuit of objectivity, and the tyranny of universal rationality, all of which seem to bypass this reality. It is possible that the dangers and pitfalls of a creative approach to ethics could be moderated by an appeal to a method, but clearly this option is not the Hauerwasian nor pentecostal way to approach the conundrum. Considering the

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[59] Hauerwas, *Sanctify Them*, 108; Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 62.

characteristics already described, it could be argued that the synthesis of pentecostal and Hauerwasian ethics demands not just one but four litmus tests. For pentecostal ethics to be authentic, there needs to be a basis in Scripture, an appeal to character, a narrative justification grounded in a community, and a practical response consistent with an appropriate ecclesiology.

In conclusion, creativity not only benefits from the other four pillars and emphases, Scripture, holiness, church, and narrative, but requires them to sustain integrity in the ethical discourse overall. Moreover, while the apparent "messiness" of such an approach might be disconcerting to ethicists who defer to a particular structure to inform deliberation, it is welcomed by others, such as Wariboko, who insist that a truly pentecostal ethic is characterised by "the pentecostal spirit". This spirit "resists obstacles to human flourishing [...] pursues experimentation and freedom [and,] swerve[s] from and resist[s] interpretations that undergird and accept the given social world as it is".[60] Clearly this conception is commensurate with the logical outworking of Hauerwas's narrative ethics—that terrible and destructive narratives will almost certainly impede human flourishing.

In Wariboko's mind, three assumptions about ethics must characterise a pentecostal approach. These are: the pursuit of justice; the commitment to openness and creativity in this pursuit; and the rejection of the terms that can often define the social-ethical world. Wariboko and Hauerwas in this regard seem to provide two sides of the same coin. Hauerwas supplies the critique, Wariboko supplies the concrete language that characterises the pentecostal solution, and they both agree on the intended outcome: justice. As if echoing Hauerwas directly, Wariboko speaks of creativity in ethics as a "refusal to discuss dominant ethical theories and ethical questions abstractly, seeking universally valid principles[.] [Instead] Pentecostal ethics has to transition from abstract, epistemology-centred ethics to the more contextual approach of comparative and social-problem-focused ethics".[61] Coming full circle back to Scripture, "Hauerwas highlights the way in which the gospel narratives inculcate flexibility as a communal virtue", suggesting

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[60] Wariboko, *Pentecostal Principle*, 156.

[61] Ibid., 156–57.

302

that an openness to possibility is both scriptural and virtuous.[62] Furthermore, such a disposition should be embraced, by "welcoming the unexpected" and living "out of control".[63] To put it another way, how can pentecostal ethics ever hope to be spirit-led, radically open, and creatively responsive to divine surprises without also expecting the lived reality of social ethics to be equally eclectic in character?[64]

6.3 Conclusion: Five Characteristics of Pentecostal Ethics

This chapter has demonstrated that the thematic emphases of pentecostal ethics described in chapter 3 resonate with Stanley Hauerwas's theological ethics. The five characteristics of pentecostal ethics that became apparent were Scripture, holiness, church, narrative, and creativity. Each of these characteristics connects explicitly with critical elements of Stanley Hauerwas's theological ethics. This synergy does not simply justify Hauerwas as a dialogue partner but demonstrates that the tendencies identified in pentecostal ethics are mirrored in his systematic theological ethics. The dialogue with Hauerwas thereby authenticates the proposed pentecostal ethics framework. If indeed Hauerwas provides a legitimate approach to Christian ethics (and chapters 4 and 5 have argued that he does), then the synergies developed between Hauerwas and the characteristics of pentecostalism mean that we can answer the criticisms of chapters 1 and 2 by reframing pentecostal ethics in Hauerwasian terms. As a result, the apparent inconsistencies in methodology or outcomes between Hauerwas and pentecostalism are now seen to be products of an authentically pentecostal approach that consciously chooses to eschew the "standard approach" in favour of an authentic quest for holiness grounded in a communal narrative.

Firstly, both Hauerwas and pentecostals place a great importance on Scripture, particularly the way it functions to shape community, particularly the Hauerwasian emphasis on narrative and its reciprocity with the reading of Scripture. Although it is not articulated as such in the pentecostal literature, the outcomes are similar and both the ideal ecclesial community in Hauerwas's view and the actual pentecostal community are,

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[62] Hays, *Moral Vision of the New Testament*, 257.

[63] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 11.

[64] Wariboko, *Pentecostal Principle*, 157.

in a very real sense, shaped by Scripture. Secondly, virtue and the pursuit of holiness are themes that resonate; indeed, holiness forms a critical part of pentecostalism's moral history. Hauerwas argues strongly in favour of virtue ethics, given its source (Scripture) and its medium (community). Thirdly, pentecostal ecclesiology indicates that it is most comfortable conceiving of a church that sits outside the public mainstream, in both an ecclesial and a political sense. Hauerwas's compatibility here is at its most stark, given he insists that the church cannot operate as "the church" in any way unless its integrity is garnered through sustained separation. Fourthly, Hauerwas's entire intellectual world is grounded on the assumption that narrative serves as the epistemological and theological basis for almost everything, especially in ethics. Pentecostalism's narrative centre invites this assumption given the predisposition for narrative at many layers of its internal rationality and practice. Finally, creativity emerges as an inescapable characteristic permeating pentecostal ethics. Hauerwas's framework not only embraces creativity, but his narrative ethics provides a backdrop that can welcome a wide variety of ethical approaches as second-order consequences that are derivative of narrative and submit to rationalities outside of themselves.

In conclusion five implicit characteristics of pentecostal ethics—Scripture, holiness, church, narrative, and creativity—are explicitly mirrored and exemplified in the work of Stanley Hauerwas: canon, consecration, church, chronicle, and creativity—a memorable taxonomy! Consequently, they provide a systematic frame that pentecostal ethics can be both legitimised (theologically) and developed (practically). Given that pentecostals have not theorised on this subject matter in a systematic way, it may well be the case that the pentecostal community is embodying (or in theory can embody) the kind of ecclesial ethics that Hauerwas would approve of. Moreover, this framework could be employed to determine the pentecostal-ness of any proposed ethical position.

The challenge in employing such a methodology is clearly in its non-linear application. The five criteria are not merely boxes to be checked independently, but each characteristic has a role to limit the power of the other characteristics, to prevent one from becoming dominant over another. Pentecostal ethics undoubtedly includes these five characteristics (at least) and each one implicates challenges to every other characteristic by exerting a moderating influence. This interdependence clearly makes

pentecostal ethics a complicated endeavour, but one which faces a chaotic world with equally compelling and creative strength.

Chapter 6 has focused on the reconciliation between the state of pentecostal ethics as identified in chapters 1 to 3 and the theological ethics proposed by Stanley Hauerwas. To establish the synergy, the characteristics of pentecostal ethics as established in the hermeneutic of generosity have been restated and then each considered in light of Hauerwas's proposals. The scriptural dimension of pentecostal ethics—the necessity for pentecostal morality to be "biblical"—has been superimposed onto Stanley Hauerwas's analysis of scriptural authority and I have noted that conceptions of biblical authority between the two unified in an acceptance of narrative theology. The pentecostal quest for holiness and the Hauerwasian primacy of virtue was then considered in relation to individual transformation. Spiritual experiences and church liturgy have been identified as central to a "from below" or "emergent" moral formation, and I have suggested that the impact of pentecostal church practices and Hauerwas's position on the formative power of more traditional sacraments are similar.

Pentecostal ecclesiology and Hauerwasian ecclesiology were then noted to have significant commonality in terms of the church's relationship to the world. Where pentecostal ecclesiology (in some respects) tends toward separation in lieu of worldly contamination, Hauerwasian ecclesiology tends towards the existence of contamination from secular liberalism and therefore necessitates a more aggressive establishment of separation. The central place of narrative in both pentecostal practice and Hauerwasian theology was noted, and I have concluded that where Hauerwas argues for narrative's centrality, pentecostals live a form of Christianity that centralises narrative in multiple dimensions of their faith and practice.

Finally, chapter 6 has acknowledged the reality of creativity in pentecostal ethics and has argued that it is a necessary by-product of narrative epistemology from the pentecostal side and an ideal vision of the agility of the church from the Hauerwasian side. Chapter 6 has concluded that these five characteristics are not only strong contenders for an approach to pentecostal ethics, but that Stanley Hauerwas's theological ethics legitimises them and moreover demonstrates how they might function together in a systematic way.

CONCLUSION OF THESIS

7.1 Concluding Remarks

This thesis has tackled the evolving space that is pentecostal ethics, pursuing the claim that something like a "pentecostal ethic" exists. This endeavour has not been straightforward for several reasons, including the relatively young age of the movement, the contested theological and moral heritage of pentecostalism, the diverse influences on the movement in its infancy, and its variable approach to morality over the decades of its decentralised growth. These challenges have been identified as part of a hermeneutic of suspicion which established the problems with pentecostal ethics, and the origin of what appears to be an inconsistent approach to ethics within the movement. These apparent challenges have been further substantiated by a detailed analysis of a pentecostal denomination based in Australia—the Australian Christian Churches (ACC)—which has produced documentation outlining positions on a range of moral issues. The approaches appeared so inconsistent that it had been easy to disregard pentecostal ethics as incoherent and chaotic, given they utilised a wide range of established methodologies but inconsistently applied them, depending on the issues at hand and attendant historical context. Use of the hermeneutic of suspicion has successfully identified some clear problems with pentecostal ethics.

Having reckoned with the history of morality in the pentecostal tradition as well as its contemporary material expression in a collection of church documents, I proposed in chapter 3 that a pentecostal approach to ethics may well embody an intelligibility not immediately obvious. Subsequently I pursued a hermeneutic of generosity to establish not just a possible explanation for the state of pentecostal ethics, but a positive understanding of pentecostal ethics—an apologetic as well as an undergirding rationality. A further exploration of pentecostal ethics through a selection of relevant academic literature has suggested the presence of five characteristics that prove necessary for an ethic to be truly pentecostal. These characteristics are not systematically articulated but nonetheless embedded into a pentecostal self-understanding of morality. These characteristics are Scripture, holiness, narrative, church, and creativity.

Pentecostals are not alone flouting the rules of engagement in Christian ethics discourse. Indeed, the entire hermeneutic of suspicion attracts its validity on the basis

that pentecostals should be following a set of pre-established rules. Indeed, if the rules are perceived as irrelevant or superfluous to pentecostals, then in what sense are they doing the wrong thing by breaking them? Stanley Hauerwas is one such theologian who not only rejects many of the "mainstream" approaches to Christian ethics but articulates constructive proposals in light of this rejection. He supplies in its place a theological ethics that centralises narrative ethics, prioritises character formation, and insists on the church as the context in which narrative be taught and lived and character formation occurs. His systematic approach supplies the language and argumentation that validates the intuitive approach taken by pentecostals and demonstrates that these seemingly disparate characteristics can coexist in a coherent way.

In actuality, Hauerwas's narrative virtue ethics demonstrates in a systematic sense the way pentecostal ethics is done, and surprisingly provides credibility to a framework that at first glance appears ad hoc. In Hauerwas's moral worldview, virtue ethics can only make sense within narrative theology. Furthermore, the church is the location of the narrative within which character formation takes place, and Hauerwas's insistence on its separation from the world guarantees that the church maintains a prophetic role and prevents amalgamation with the world—a concern shared with pentecostals. This, along with Hauerwas's emphasis on Scripture as the church's book, demonstrates how these characteristics can work together in a systematic way, without insisting that ethics (including pentecostal variations) should be systematised into a traditional framework.

The five characteristics of pentecostal ethics have their methodological integrity demonstrated by Hauerwas, but his methodology does not necessarily explain why pentecostals might attend to different characteristics with varying emphases, nor why there may be a creative and diverse set of valid responses. The answer to this is also embedded within the Hauerwasian approach, as he insists that his essential pillars—narrative, virtue, and the church—are in place to keep the others in check. The relationship is dynamic, rather than static and linear. It is not sufficient to have only a consistent and systematic approach, but each ethical conclusion must attend to the characteristics and make sense of who the moral agent/s is/are in relation to the church community.

If the Hauerwasian principles are to be applied in the same dynamic way in an articulation of pentecostal ethics, the essential nature of pentecostal ethics is revealed.

For an ethic to be truly pentecostal, it need not generate identical positions or uniform strategies, but it must incorporate the five elements, allow each element to act as a check against the overcompensation of the others, and safeguard and sustain a creative openness to what a dynamic pentecostal approach to morality may produce.

7.2 Future Trajectories

In recognising the reality that pentecostalism as a young movement has much to learn, and the proposal that Hauerwas, while not without his flaws, has much to contribute, there are some important trajectories and opportunities to consider for further research. There are three characteristics of pentecostalism that seem to me to be crucial in framing future dialogue. Note at this stage that I am not discussing ethics in particular. Having studied its theological history and chronological trajectories, these characteristics are what, I think, demarcate the nature of the pentecostal movement. Pentecostalism is diverse, evolving, and open. Firstly, pentecostalism's historical diversity, inclusive of various antecedent traditions and practices, enables an agile approach to its ecclesial and social settings. Drawing from diverse traditions, such as Methodism, holiness, Protestantism, Anabaptism, Word of Faith, and Evangelicalism, as well as broad educational, economic, social, and ethnic contexts, allows pentecostals to pivot and respond to their environments quickly without sacrificing the values and priorities central to the movement. Secondly, regarding pentecostalism's evolution, it is correct to say that Christianity across the board evolves and changes, but I think pentecostalism, as argued by Mark Hutchinson, Shane Clifton, and others, has evolved in leaps and bounds, even in its first one hundred years of history. Finally, pentecostalism's openness is a characteristic that guarantees its ongoing existence. What I mean by this is that pentecostalism is a dynamic movement and expression of Christianity that will never likely "arrive". Pentecostalism's openness to change has seen it flourish around the globe and adapt to a transforming world in extraordinary ways.

None of these characteristics are of first-order dogma or even doctrine. This I think makes a case that as much as pentecostalism in some respects and contexts *is* a denominational term, or a term for a movement such as the ACC, it is much more a way of being in the ecclesial context commensurate with the definition I identified in the opening of this thesis. Pentecostalism is more than a style but less than a formal ecclesial

authority established in catechism. Castelo makes a similar argument by suggesting that pentecostalism is beyond religious classification but maintains a "way of being and participating in the world".[1] All of this to say, forces that work against pentecostalism's diversity, evolution, and openness, are forces that are in opposition to pentecostalism's core nature. As much as Hauerwas's ethics is grounded in his understanding of Christianity and vision of the church, it seems to be the case that any moral vision unique to pentecostalism, or indeed the ACC, should find its roots in an overall "way of being."

What does that mean specifically for pentecostal ethics? I believe that the same logic needs to be applied. Pentecostal ethics needs to sustain these three characteristics—diversity, evolution, and openness—if it is to reflect its narrative coherently. As these characteristics undergird pentecostalism's nature rather than its doctrine, it seems to be the case that for pentecostal ethics to be truly pentecostal, it needs to be, firstly, diverse: to recognise the legitimacy and expediency of its reality, drawing from various Christian ethical traditions in keeping with its historical narrative; secondly, it needs to be evolving: to subject ethical positions to revision and reconsideration over time; and thirdly, it needs to be open: to new possibilities for the future. Indeed, the fifth dimension of this project's framework, an eclectic and creative use of methodology, insists that pentecostal ethics retain a state of flux and not succumb to rigid systematisation.

In a similar way to pentecostalism more generally, maybe a pathway forward for pentecostal ethics would be to insist that a systematic approach prevents the task from being truly pentecostal, and furthermore, stifles the creativity and innovation that has characterised the pentecostal movement as a whole. One of the critiques made of Hauerwas is that he lacks a systematic approach to his ethics, indeed to all his theology. While this critique is contested, it seems to be the case that he is systematic enough to articulate exactly what might be happening in pentecostal ethics, but anti-systematic enough to prevent his theological ethics stifling the spirit behind pentecostal ethics. This balance demonstrates that what might be considered a vice for systematic ethics, including many of the traditional modes mentioned earlier, may in fact be a virtue for this project. Hauerwas's narrative approach assumes the pentecostal story is important, and the pentecostal story insists that his contribution might be too.

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[1] Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics*, 129.

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