

**HOLY SPIRIT, HOLY BODIES?
PENTECOSTAL SPIRITUALITY, PNEUMATOLOGY AND THE POLITICS OF EMBODIMENT**

By

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Abstract

Pentecostalism is often heralded as a movement which thwarts the platonic body-soul/spirit dualism, through its emphasis on embodied spirituality. Recent recognition of the 'progressive' pentecostal stream has been used to further prove that pentecostals have evolved from their perceived initial stance of 'otherworldliness'. However, by looking at the history of classical pentecostalism and its contemporary 'progressive' expression in England, I argue in this thesis that pentecostalism has been characterised by a tension between a *pneumatic dualism* and a *pneumatic integralism* in relation to human embodiment. By *pneumatic dualism*, I propose that the Spirit is encountered by many pentecostals historically and in the present, as one who engages the human body in its physiological sense, for the sake of healing, personal piety and religiosity. However, though the Spirit engages the body in some senses, she is not commonly identified with the problems of body politics in the church or the world whether in the matter of class, gender or racial injustice. In this thesis, I show that there has been a consistent minority within classical pentecostalism in the USA and the UK whose theological ethics have been informed by *pneumatic integralism*, within which the Holy Spirit's presence is expected to liberate aspects of human embodiment beyond the narrowly 'religious', including in political terms. For this minority within pentecostalism, the Holy Spirit is recognised as one who attends to the oppressions which stems from the racialising, gendering and classing of human bodies, and who calls the church to respond. I argue that an integrated pneumatology in relation to the human person can be seen in Jesus' resurrection by the Spirit. The retention of Jesus' scars post-resurrection offers a basis for pentecostal ethics in which attentiveness to oppression and the practice of solidarity with the marginalised become markers of the Spirit-baptised.

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Abbreviations

AG	Assemblies of God (USA)
AOG	Assemblies of God (Great Britain)
COG	Church of God
COGIC	Church of God in Christ
COGOP	Church of God of Prophecy
ECCi	Emmanuel Community Church International
ECS	Emmanuel Community School
NTCG	New Testament Church of God
NUCHA	Nehemiah United Churches Housing Association
PCU	Pentecostal Credit Union

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Pentecostals in Britain along with all Christians around the world are faced with urgent questions regarding who they believe God is, what such a God has to offer to a world in turmoil, and especially what such a God might offer to the oppressed. While these questions may be categorised by some as ‘political’, ‘public’ or ‘ethical’, they represent what is fast becoming (if it isn’t already) the core of the theological task for the world which is emerging. I introduce this thesis with this task and the creation of the future in mind.

Contemporary Britain finds itself at a crucial crossroads in the years 2020-21, in which I have completed writing up this thesis. The Brexit vote of 2016 triggered a set of events which would see Britain officially leave on the 31st January 2020 with detailed negotiations set to take place until 31st December 2020. January 2021 will be the month in which the reality of that decision starts to become increasingly evident. However, Brexit’s impact will also be mingled with the ongoing economic fallout which started in 2020 due to the Covid-19 global pandemic. As I write, Britain is in the midst of a lockdown, the population is grief-stricken due to the mounting number of deaths and fearful about the future. It was in the midst of this lockdown that George Floyd was murdered in front of the world, triggering conversations across sectors about how Britain is doing on the matter of racial justice, diversity and inclusion. As #blacklivesmatter protests sprung up in major cities, statues of slave traders were torn down and public figures were forced to resign due to their own failings to address their prejudices and their language.

The collective trauma of Covid-19 and the impact of the Brexit vote will continue to send shockwaves through life in Britain for the foreseeable future, not only in economic terms, but particularly in relation to social divisions and mental health.¹ However, as many have stated: though we may all be in the same storm, we have not all been in the same boat. Brexit, Covid-19 and the aftermath of George Floyd's murder, have weighed heaviest on those already burdened down by the state of the world; those living in poverty or close to it, UK ethnic minority groups, women and children. Increases in unemployment and underemployment, as well as the disruption of children's education have increased the plight of the poorest in Britain.² The double risk to black and minority ethnic groups of dying of Covid-19 has been discussed by many,³ as has the demand for women's refuge centres as the brutal realities of domestic violence have come to the fore.⁴

The context in which British Christianity sits has therefore become increasingly complex, as issues which had previously been less conspicuous for some, have been pushed to the forefront. Churches in Britain find themselves at a pivotal moment in which they would hope to lead, yet themselves have not escaped the consequences that have impacted wider society. Churches have suffered the effects of Brexit-related conflict as various traditions as well as leaders and members wrestled with the biggest political decision many

¹ Anant Kumar and K. Rajasekharan Nayar, "COVID 19 and its mental health consequences", *Journal of Mental Health*, (2020): 1.

² Alison Andrew, Sarah Cattan, Monica Costa Dias, Christine Farquharson, Lucy Kraftman, Sonya Krutikova, Angus Phimister, and Almudena Sevilla, "Inequalities in Children's Experiences of Home Learning during the COVID-19 Lockdown in England," *Fiscal Studies*, 41, (2020): 654.

³ Chris White and Vahé Nafilyan, "Coronavirus (COVID-19) related deaths by ethnic group, England and Wales: 2 March 2020 to 10 April 2020," The Office of National Statistics, accessed May 7, 2020, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/coronavirusrelateddeathsbyethnicgroupenglandandwales/2march2020to10april2020>.

⁴ June Kelly and Tomos Morgan, "Coronavirus: Domestic Abuse Calls up 25% Since Lockdown, Charity Says," BBC News, accessed April 6, 2020, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52157620>; Caroline Bradbury-Jones and Louise Isham, "The pandemic paradox: The consequences of COVID-19 on domestic violence" *Journal of Clinical Nursing* 29 (2020): 2047-2049.

would ever expect to face.⁵ Congregations have lost members to Covid-19 with some losing leaders and elders who laid the foundation for church life over generations. During Covid-19 lockdown, church leaders have been forced to pivot, doing church online and pastoral phone calls instead of visits provoking debates about what it means to be part of the church, and what the future of the church may be.⁶ In the wake of George Floyd's murder, Christians engaged (often uncomfortably, sometimes forcibly) in conversations about racism within the church as well as in wider society.⁷ Many remained silent altogether, while others made public displays of support for #blacklivesmatter.⁸ Stories emerged about racial bias in churches resulting in some resignations and a significant amount of calls for change in many denominations and institutions.⁹ For the most part, it seemed that the church was caught up in the same whirlwind as wider society, with little to chart its own path forward, let alone one for others to follow.

While the Church of England is the most visible church in British public life as the established church, pentecostals represent the fastest growing churches in England.¹⁰

⁵ Ekaterina Kolpinskaya and Stuart Fox, "Praying on Brexit? Unpicking the Effect of Religion on Support for European Union Integration and Membership," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 57, no. 3 (May 2019):588-593; Linda Woodhead and Katie Gaddini, "Brexit shines light on Church of England rift between leadership and Anglican majority," Yahoo News, accessed May 7, 2020, <https://uk.news.yahoo.com/brexit-supporting-church-england-odds-141111723.html>.

⁶ Heidi A. Campbell, ed. *The Distanced Church: Reflections on Doing Church Online* (Digital Religion Publications, 2020).

⁷ Arun Arora, "How can the Church of England speak about race when its leaders are so white?" The Guardian, accessed January 6, 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jun/07/how-can-the-church-of-england-speak-about-race-when-its-leaders-are-so-white-george-floyd-covid-19>.

⁸ Steve Tinning, "George Floyd: what can I do?" The Baptist Union of Great Britain, accessed January 6, 2021, https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/579447/George_Floyd_what.aspx; Bishop Declan Lang and Bishop Paul McAleenan, "Bishops stand in solidarity with US sisters and brothers as they challenge the evil of racism and the brutal killing of George Floyd," The Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, 3rd June 2020. Accessed January 6, 2021, <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/bishops-solidarity-with-sisters-and-brothers-in-usa-over-evil-of-racism-and-killing-of-george-floyd/>.

⁹ Azariah France-Williams, *Ghost Ship: Institutional Racism and the Church of England* (London: SCM Press, 2020); Shanti Das, "Black Lives Matter: 'Racist' church leaders agree to stand down," The Times, 21st June 2020, accessed January 6, 2021 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/black-lives-matter-racist-church-leaders-agree-to-stand-down-rbpd9768f>.

¹⁰ Peter Brierley, "Where is the church going?" Brierley Consulting, 5, accessed January 7, 2021, <https://www.brierleyconsultancy.com/where-is-the-church-going>.

Critical reflection on the role of the Church in Britain now and in the future must therefore include pentecostals as crucial interlocuters. While on the surface pentecostals could be expected to have a greater motivation for public action due to their historic socio-economic demography among the working class and the significant numbers of black members and women, in reality pentecostals have not, historically, taken part in social and political organisation in significant numbers. While scholars often describe pentecostal spirituality and theology as distinct from other Christian traditions because of its emphasis on embodiment and its engagement with the 'whole person', the lack of motivation to tackle social inequality, may suggest that this reading of pentecostalism should perhaps be contested.¹¹ British scholars have offered various explanations for the lack of pentecostal engagement. Valentina Alexander would explain that black churches including pentecostals are exhibiting as 'passive radicalism' in which they are supported inwardly by their faith and care for those in need, but do not imagine they might transform or recreate the unjust systems and structures that surround them.¹² Marcia Clarke, Joe Aldred, Nicole Toulis and Richard Burgess would support Alexander's summation regarding black pentecostals in England.¹³ William Kay would remind us that classical (mainly white) pentecostals in Britain have historically disengaged from politics, although they have been vocal about their pacifist stance.¹⁴ Robert Beckford would speak of the bewitchment of black pentecostalism by

¹¹ Marcia Clarke, "Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience: an empirical study of women in the British Black Pentecostal Church" (PhD Diss., University of Birmingham, 2016) 175.

¹² Valentina Alexander, "Breaking Every Fetter"? To What Extent has the black led church in Britain developed a Theology of Liberation?" (PhD., Warwick University, 1996) 228-9.

¹³ Clarke, "Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience," 113; Joe Aldred, *Thinking Outside the Box on Race, Faith and Life* (Hertford: Hansib, 2013) 70-71; Nicole Toulis, *Believing Identity: Pentecostalism and the Mediation of Jamaican Ethnicity and Gender in England* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 1997) 19; Richard Burgess, "African Pentecostal spirituality and civic engagement: the case of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in Britain," *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, 30:3, (2009): 255-273.

¹⁴ William Kay, "British Assemblies of God: The War Years," *Pneuma* 11, no.1 (1989): 51-58.

colonial Christianity, which undermines its political activism.¹⁵ This would also extend to white pentecostals who for Beckford, though not black, are the descendents of those who constructed these notions of Christianity which focus on the spiritual over the material and embodied aspects of life. David Muir would agree with Beckford's critique while point to the signs of pentecostals organising.¹⁶

What is lacking in all these attempts to engage pentecostalism with political theology, however, is an attempt to address what I see as the proverbial spanner in the works; the complex and awkward interaction between pentecostals' *appearance* as an embodied spirituality and the *reality* of its unwillingness to recognise the Spirit as one who attends to the realities of embodiment particularly in terms of politics and power among and between different bodies. For example, in James K. A. Smith's *Thinking in Tongues*, he asserts that pentecostalism amounts to 'performative postmodernism' due to its embrace of the body as seen in bodily healing.¹⁷ However, he does not explain how pentecostalism resists the negation of bodily particularity which he defines as core to the universal rationalism of modernity.¹⁸ I will argue that this explanation is lacking because, pentecostalism tends to retain the negation of the body and of bodily particularity in its theology and spirituality.

Miroslav Volf argues that an emphasis on the 'materiality of salvation'¹⁹ is the point of commonality between pentecostals and liberationists who are often opposed to one

¹⁵ Robert Beckford, *Documentary as exorcism: resisting the bewitchment of colonial Christianity* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014) 4.

¹⁶ David Muir, "Pentecostals and Political Engagement," in *Pentecostals and Charismatics*, ed. Joe Aldred (London: SPCK, 2018) 207-211.

¹⁷ James K. A. Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010) 59.

¹⁸ Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 55-56.

¹⁹ Miroslav Volf, "Materiality of Salvation: An Investigation in the Soteriologies of Liberation and Pentecostal Theologies," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 26, no. 3 (Summer 1989): 447-467.

another. In both cases he suggests: 'Salvation is not merely a spiritual reality touching only an individual person's inner being but also has to do with *bodily* human existence.'²⁰ Putting aside the fact that we cannot speak of 'pentecostals' (or indeed 'liberationists') as a monolith, we might consider this to be generally true. But the fundamental differences in exactly which aspects of 'bodily human existence' each group expects might be 'saved,' and the means by which each group imagines this transformation occurs, means their 'materialities' are almost incomparable. Attempts to outline a pentecostal political theology - rather than simply borrowing from a liberationist perspective - must first deal with the fundamental question of how pentecostals encounter the Spirit as embodied beings and what they believe the Spirit's presence means for the embodied person and embodied community (i.e. what Volf's 'materiality of salvation' might mean for them). If pentecostals can - as they have done historically and do in the present - both acknowledge the Spirit as one who fills and heals the body and refuse to attend to and address the dishonouring of various bodies which differ by class, gender or race, then what does this say about what pentecostals imagine the presence of the Holy Spirit means for the human (embodied) person? Pentecostalism is held within a tension between a belief in the transformative power of the Spirit on the one hand, and on the other, a consciousness of ongoing poverty and an inability to recognise and oppose racism and sexism in the world and most crucially, in the life of the church. How might pentecostalism's inconsistencies be resolved vis-à-vis their claim to being Spirit-filled and sanctified and their failure to identify and divest themselves of various forms of oppression? It is this question that I seek to address in this thesis.

²⁰ Volf, "Materiality of Salvation," 448.

This question of the interaction between spirituality, embodiment and the matters of social and political justice, is not simply relevant to pentecostals but to Christians of all traditions, and people of other faiths. In a pluralistic context like Britain, assessment of how faith is experienced and how spirituality relates to social and political relationships and actions is an important contribution to the understanding of the relationship between faith and public life. As Britain seeks to define itself outside of the EU, and find a path forward after the global pandemic, attentiveness to how spirituality impacts political life is important. It is especially crucial that religious beliefs are brought into critical dialogue with the lived realities of those who are most disadvantaged in Britain, in order that social, economic and political reorganising overcomes the traps of history in which economic greed and white patriarchy act as dominating and violent powers. This is not simply a British problem, but one for the West to contend with, as well as places around the world which have been shaped by colonisation and the current realities of global capitalism, making this thesis relevant for wider conversations beyond Britain.

1.2 Literature Review

This interdisciplinary research project has demanded engagement with various areas of knowledge including history, religious studies, theology, biblical studies, sociology, anthropology, philosophy and critical race and gender studies. I am indebted to scholars from across these various disciplines whose work has allowed me to construct this argument. I make clear as I go through the thesis who these voices are but in this section, I will review the literature relating to the specific theme of pentecostal spirituality, theology and action in the context of social and political life in Britain, with some comments on non-British scholarship. I will focus on scholars who have explored classical pentecostal spirituality and theology with great attention to the socio-economic, cultural and political

contexts of believers. An interdisciplinary approach is evident in several key pieces of work on which I am building.

William Kay is one of the only scholars to have produced work on British pentecostalism as a whole movement as opposed to discussing only one racial group within the movement. In *Pentecostals in Britain*, Kay traces the development of pentecostalism in Britain, with a particular focus on majority white working-class denominations and black pentecostals from the Caribbean.²¹ Through empirical data gathered from a wide-ranging series of surveys, his work highlights the doctrinal positions and practices of pentecostals, demonstrating notable variations between denominations particularly in the controversial questions such as women's leadership. Though *Pentecostals in Britain* does not deal with the matter of public action or political theology, Kay's wider work does expound on British pentecostals' pacifism.²² Kay offers us the socio-economic analysis of British pentecostals that is often lacking but is crucial for this thesis in which context and wider human experience beyond the 'religious' matters. The data that Kay offers on the AOG in Great Britain is especially relevant to the case studies I have conducted, as the churches all belong to this denomination.

Valentina Alexander's thesis *'Breaking Every Fetter?'* considers the social and political oppression of black people and the potential for black-led churches to develop and embody a theology of liberation.²³ While Alexander's research does not focus exclusively on pentecostalism, she discusses the interplay between black spirituality, theology in black churches and public action, making her work foundational for my research. Alexander

²¹ William Kay, *Pentecostals in Britain* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2000) 199.

²² William Kay, "British Assemblies of God: The War Years," *Pneuma* 11, no.1 (1989): 51-58.

²³ Alexander, "Breaking Every Fetter?" 1.

highlights black pentecostal engagement in social projects, and the theological perspectives of those leaders who are involved in public ministry. Her conclusions are that black churches overall in the UK, embody 'passive radicalism' in which liberative spirituality strengthens believers in the midst of oppressions without either addressing the 'socio-historical source(s)' or aligning theology towards the liberative agenda.²⁴ Alexander argues that black pentecostals alongside other black Christians fail to realise the 'active radicalism' which would bring about transformation through identifying and addressing the root causes of oppression through social analysis and liberative theological frameworks.²⁵ Alexander highlights ecumenical black church alliances as models of 'passive radicalism' in that they engage in critical reflection and action for the sake of the oppressed but do not attempt to alter systematic oppression.²⁶ Sustained liberation, she argues, will depend upon a 'close and careful interchange of ideas and action at each level of its theological manifestation' (popular, pastoral and professional).²⁷ Alexander sees a crucial interplay between the role of the theologian and the pastor, and a need for believers as a whole to embrace the task of cultivating a political appetite which will enable public ministry that involves the work of justice.

Robert Beckford's, *Dread and Pentecostal*, builds upon Alexander's work by asking how African Caribbean Christians might discover a liberative theological framework geared towards black freedom.²⁸ Taking a similar approach to Alexander, Beckford focuses again on social analysis and theology, arguing that pentecostals will uncover a liberative theology

²⁴ Alexander, "Breaking Every Fetter?" 228-9.

²⁵ Alexander, "Breaking Every Fetter?" 273.

²⁶ Alexander, "Breaking Every Fetter?" 294-6.

²⁷ Alexander, "Breaking Every Fetter?" 332.

²⁸ Sandra Schneiders, "Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality," in *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality*, ed, Arthur Holder (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2005) 26.

through consciousness of political issues and critical engagement with the biblical text in the light of black people's experiences. By centring the 'dread elements' inherent to pentecostal history, theology and function, he argues that black pentecostal churches might be liberated from the influence of colonial Christianity which undermines their political potential. For Beckford, pentecostals must embrace the 'internal and external' dimensions of 'dread pentecostal theology' (DPT).²⁹ In the former, the individual is empowered spiritually and psychologically as consciousness is raised, and in the latter, believers engage in action. Beckford addresses the apolitical tendencies that underpin particularly black pentecostalism, by challenging the church-world dualism and colonial theological frameworks which discourage any action on 'earthly matters'. He advocates for an integral pneumatology, in which there is 'a more concrete link between the life of the Spirit (or 'pneumatic') and the political' in order to see the church empowered for transforming oppressive realities.³⁰ Beckford ends his work by proposing DPT as a new 'reading convention' for black churches in Britain which he argues bridges the gap between 'thinking' and 'doing' by providing a space for political theology to develop and stimulate action.³¹

Marcia Clarke's "Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience: an empirical study of women in the British Black Pentecostal Church" takes a different approach to the scholarship by making spirituality the focus of her critical analysis. Importantly, in relation to my thesis, she takes an anthropological approach by considering the development of black pentecostal women's spirituality in the context of their social and political struggles as often working-class women who are black in Britain. In keeping with both Alexander and

²⁹ Robert Beckford, *Dread and Pentecostal: A Political Theology for the Black Church in Britain* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2011) 188-9

³⁰ Beckford, *Dread and Pentecostal*, 62.

³¹ Beckford, *Dread and Pentecostal*, 208, 210.

Beckford, she argues that pentecostal spirituality engages the whole of life and is essential to the life and flourishing for black pentecostals, in her case specifically women. As she explains: '[Black British women's] pentecostal experience coupled with predominantly difficult life circumstances stimulated the continuing development of pentecostal spirituality as lived experience.'³² Though Clarke does not deal with the matters of social and political action to the extent that Alexander and Beckford do, she acknowledges the dualism in pentecostal expectations about what Spirit encounter means as 'lived experience' and in the midst of the challenging life circumstances she describes.

Notable contributions to the study of pentecostalism, ethics and public engagement have also been offered by other British scholars. David Muir's work has critiqued British pentecostalism and sought to promote political theology, as well as highlight strategies for practical organisation and action.³³ Bishop Joe Aldred has also contributed work addressing pentecostal theology and social engagement in Britain historically and in the present.³⁴ Nicole Toulis' work, *Believing Identity: Pentecostalism and the Mediation of Jamaican Ethnicity and Gender in England* was a primarily sociological piece which focused on one congregation in the New Testament Church of God (NTCG), a prominent UK black pentecostal denomination. She highlighted the importance of the black pentecostal churches as a 'powerful forum for the construction of new identities' in the midst of a challenging social context for migrants from the Caribbean.³⁵

³² Clarke, "Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience," 113.

³³ Muir, "Pentecostals and Political Engagement,"; David R. Muir, "Power in Black and Pentecostal: An Engagement with Bretherton," *Studies in Christian Ethics* 33, no. 2 (May 2020): 253-261.

³⁴ Aldred, *Thinking Outside the Box*, 63-74, 89-90.

³⁵ Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 19.

There is also a wealth of pentecostal scholarship which focusses beyond Britain and has contributed significantly to the foundation of this research project. Primarily studies of pentecostal social engagement and work in pentecostal political and public theology have been very important. Donald Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori's *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Social Engagement*, has been very useful to allow me to see British pentecostalism in a global perspective.³⁶ It has been most helpful in offering the categorisations they create which, though coined for the global south, have strong resonances for British pentecostals many of whom have migrated to Britain. Their designation of the 'progressive' stream has provided language for the stream of pentecostalism which I have engaged with in my research in Britain. Amos Yong's *In the Days of Caesar* has been very important for critical reflection on the social and political action of pentecostals in Britain.³⁷ Though this book is very far ranging in terms of geographic and cultural contexts, the five-fold Christological model offered by Yong, provides a broad global frame within which to reflect on the theology and action of pentecostals in the British context. Daniela Augustine's *The Spirit and the Common Good* offered a very unique contribution to my reflections, particularly in her framing of pneumatic activity in terms of nurturing the Common Good and enabling human flourishing.³⁸ While I have critically analysed the matters of power and (in)justice within pentecostal churches, Augustine, writing with the Eastern European pentecostal tradition, provides a rich theological framing of believers' transformation through the Spirit's

³⁶ Donald Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

³⁷ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010).

³⁸ Daniela C. Augustine, *The Spirit and the Common Good* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2019).

‘christoforming work’³⁹ and ultimately presents humanity as called to be ‘the visible, living iconography of the invisible God in the cathedral of the cosmos’.⁴⁰ This positive contribution to pentecostal theological anthropology has served as an important marker in my own reflections. Nimi Wariboko’s *The Charismatic City and the Public Resurgence of Religion: A Pentecostal Social Ethics of Cosmopolitan Life* offers a public pneumatology which is deeply relevant to my work.⁴¹ While I focus on the integralism of the Spirit’s work in an anthropological sense and as a route to public/political theology/action, his expansion of the work of the Spirit which thwarts the sacred-secular divide, takes a similar trajectory away from ‘pneumatic dualism.’

Secondly, I have depended on scholars who work has engaged the themes of pentecostal spirituality and ethics. Daniel Castelo’s *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics: The Epicletic Community* has been invaluable in discussing pentecostal moral theology, with a specific focus on the earliest pentecostal believers in the USA.⁴² Taking a moral theological approach, in which he is concerned primarily with how pentecostals are being formed by encounter with God, he discusses ‘abiding’ and ‘waiting’ as practice-orientations. While I take a more critical assessment of early pentecostalism and am concerned with ethical matters (what pentecostals might *do* as well as *be* in the world) he engages some of the core questions of my own work.⁴³ In dealing with the matter of divine/human agency,

³⁹ Augustine, *The Spirit and the Common Good*, 15.

⁴⁰ Augustine, *The Spirit and the Common Good*, 45.

⁴¹ Nimi Wariboko, *The Charismatic City and the Public Resurgence of Religion: A Pentecostal Social Ethics of Cosmopolitan Life* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

⁴² Daniel Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics: The Epicletic Community* (Cleveland: CPT, 2012)

⁴³ ‘Was this capitulation [racial division] a failure of the Spirit’s work of adequately infusing the gift and grace of divine charity on the hearts of Early pentecostals? Or was the development more accurately a failure of these early adherents to translate and carry over the insight and impulses they experienced in the doxological modalities of abiding and waiting into quotidian living where habits, dispositions, desires and ‘second nature’ or default behaviours are at play? Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics*, 79.

Christian virtue and the matter of spiritual formation as a root to ethical (or moral) action, Castelo has helped me to sharpen my own thoughts. Woolley Thompson has followed in the footsteps of Daniel Castelo in his thesis “Towards a Pentecostal Ethic: Appropriating Pentecostal Hermeneutics for Ethical Reflection in a Bahamian Context.”⁴⁴ Noting the lack of ethical literature within pentecostal scholarship, he defines pentecostal ethics as: ‘the collectively practiced choices and decisions that amount to the right thing to do as an adherent to pentecostalism.’⁴⁵ The pentecostal ethical model, he argues depends upon ‘spiritual connection’ (the pneumatological aspect) and ‘the interpretation of biblical concepts’ (the hermeneutical).⁴⁶ These are two aspects of pentecostalism which I engage with in my critical reflections throughout the thesis, but with wider discussion about the impact of wider human (social and political) experience within theological anthropology and ethics (both theory and practice). Lisa Stephenson’s feminist scholarship, particularly *Dismantling the Dualisms for American Pentecostal Women in Ministry: A Feminist-Pneumatological Approach* has provided the resources for assessing the matter of power within the movement, in theology and leadership specifically.⁴⁷ In naming the presence of dualisms and dealing with the matter of theological anthropology, Stephenson’s work has been essential in motivating and sharpening my own pursuit of the dismantling of the pneumatic dualisms inherent to pentecostal theological anthropology which I address.

I have also greatly benefitted from the critical work of black and womanist scholars who have drawn together the matters of pentecostal spirituality, theological ethics and

⁴⁴ Woolley Thompson, “Towards a Pentecostal Ethic: Appropriating Pentecostal Hermeneutics for Ethical Reflection in a Bahamian Context,” (PhD Diss., University of Birmingham, 2018).

⁴⁵ Thompson, “Towards a Pentecostal Ethic,” 89.

⁴⁶ Thompson, “Towards a Pentecostal Ethic,” 90-4, 250-2.

⁴⁷ Lisa P. Stephenson, *Dismantling the Dualisms for American Pentecostal Women in Ministry: A Feminist-Pneumatological Approach* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

politics in a manner that I emulate in this thesis. Anthony Reddie's work, though not focussed on pentecostalism, is unparalleled in Britain in terms of its scope within the field of black and liberation theology. Reddie's work has therefore been crucial to my critical analysis of race and power in Britain, as well as for my analysis of British pentecostal theology and spirituality.⁴⁸ The work of Estrelida Alexander has been invaluable to understanding black pentecostalism in the USA specifically, especially her monumental work *Black Fire: 100 Years of Black Pentecostalism*.⁴⁹ In this text she eloquently presents the history of the movement, with attention to its African heritage which was particularly important for my own work, and the movements racial struggles and politics around gender. I will also highlight Anthea Butler's *Women in the Church of God in Christ: Making a Sanctified World*, as a landmark in pentecostal womanist scholarship which engages in intersectional discussions about power, race and gender in the Church of God in Christ. While I focus my gender analysis on the positional powerholders in pentecostal churches, Butler adds significant nuance to this discussion by emphasising the ways in which women subvert patriarchal contexts through the 'ladies ministry'.⁵⁰ Jonathan Langston Chism, David Daniels III, Antipas Harris, Leonard Lovett, Eric Williams, and Cheryl Townsend Gilkes have also been important contributors to my understanding of black pentecostalism and the matters of race, gender and liberation in the USA.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Anthony Reddie, *Is God Colour-blind? Insights from Black Theology for Christian Ministry* (London: SPCK, 2009); Anthony Reddie, *Working Against the Grain: Re-imagining Black Theology in the 21st Century* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Anthony Reddie, *Theologising Brexit: A Liberationist and Postcolonial Critique* (London: Routledge, 2019).

⁴⁹ Estrelida Y. Alexander, *Black Fire: One Hundred Years of African American Pentecostalism* (Downers Grove: IVP Press, 2011)

⁵⁰ Anthea Butler, *Women in the Church of God in Christ: Making a Sanctified World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012) 11, 15, 36-37.

⁵¹ Jonathan Langston Chism, "'The Saints Go Marching': Black Pentecostal Critical Consciousness and the Political Protest Activism of Pastors and Leaders in the Church of God in Christ in the Civil Rights Era," *Pneuma* 35, no. 3 (2013): 424-443; David D. Daniels III, "Navigating the Territory: Early Afro-Pentecostalism as a Movement within Black Civil Society" in *Afro-Pentecostalism: Black Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity In*

The literature I have reviewed here, offered different threads which I have drawn on in different sections of the thesis. They allowed me to better understand the nuances of pentecostal spirituality, church experiences, social and political contexts, theology and action. They also offered me a location for my own questions and were very important as I sought to analyse the data, by allowing me to see parallels and points of contestation with existing analyses of pentecostalism.

1.3 Definitions

1.3.1 Which Pentecostalism?

Pentecostalism is recognised as a specific movement by many scholars who principally focus on the Azusa Street Mission led by William J. Seymour as the birthplace of this tradition in the early 20th century. Scholars have typically used the term ‘classical’ to describe Azusa Street’s pentecostalism, which they consider to be defined by various features.⁵² Some consider the doctrine of speaking in tongues as initial evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit to be the cornerstone of classical pentecostalism, which consequently makes Charles Fox Parham - the promoter of this teaching - the founder-like figure of pentecostalism.⁵³ However, others within the movement have spoken of classical pentecostalism in wider terms, which is particularly helpful because speaking in tongues is not unique to pentecostals even if the link to baptism in the Spirit is.⁵⁴ Steven Land for example, defines

History and Culture, eds. Estrelida Y. Alexander and Amos Yong, 43-62 (New York: New York University Press, 2011); Antipas L. Harris, "Black Folk Religion in Black Holiness Pentecostalism," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 28, 1 (2019): 103-122; Antipas L. Harris, "Black Pentecostal Hermeneutics?," *Pneuma* 41, 2 (2019): 193-217; Leonard Lovett, "Black Origins of the Pentecostal Movement," in *Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins*, ed. Vinson Synan (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1975) 123-142; Eric L. Williams "More Than Tongues Can Tell: Significations in Black Pentecostal Thought," (PhD Diss., University of Edinburgh, 2014); Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, *"If It Wasn't for the Women...": Black Women's Experience and Womanist Culture in Church and Community* (New York: Orbis Books, 2001).

⁵² Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, xviii.

⁵³ Lovett, "Black Origins of the Pentecostal Movement," 129; Robert Mapes Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited* (Oxford: Oxford, University Press, 1979) 55-56.

⁵⁴ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 11; Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Grand

classical pentecostalism in doctrinal terms, as imbibing the ‘full gospel’ which includes an emphasis on justification, sanctification, healing and the pre-millennial return of Christ as well as the doctrine of tongues as initial evidence of spirit-baptism.⁵⁵ On the basis of its particular eschatological emphases, some would also define classical pentecostalism as additionally being marked out by a particularly intense missionary fervour.⁵⁶

However, describing the pentecostalism of Azusa Street as ‘classical’ is awkward for several reasons which cannot be resolved necessarily, but must be noted. Firstly, the attempt to define pentecostalism according to one set of criteria on which everyone agreed or agrees, is impossible. Even at Azusa Street the early pentecostals did not agree on all areas of doctrine or practice, as seen in the debates about the nature of sanctification, or the significance of tongues, which often led to splits within the early days of the movement.⁵⁷ The second issue, is that even if there was an agreement on what constituted pentecostalism, naming the USA’s pentecostalism ‘classical’ carries certain connotations of ‘original’ or in some sense ‘proper’ pentecostalism which risks confirming the myth that pentecostalism is an American export.⁵⁸ It is therefore unclear why America’s pentecostalism would be labelled ‘classical’ as opposed to being counted as one of many indigenous forms of pentecostalism.⁵⁹ However, since this language is commonly used we

Rapids, Mi: Baker Academic, 1987) 15-16.

⁵⁵ Steven Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993) 18

⁵⁶ Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 18.

⁵⁷ Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1987) 17-23; William J. Seymour, *The Doctrines and Disciplines of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission, 1915* (Joplin: Christian Life Books, 2000) 81.

⁵⁸ I will use ‘America’ or ‘American’ to speak principally of the United States of America (USA) and the pentecostals which have developed there. I will specify Latin America/n where appropriate. Dayton uses the term ‘original pentecostalism’ rather than ‘classical pentecostalism’ in *Theological Roots*, 17. Concerns about the American roots of pentecostalism are seen in Cédric Mayrargue, *The Paradoxes of Pentecostalism in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Paris: L’Institut Français des relations internationales, 2008) 2.

⁵⁹ It would not be accurate to label Azusa Street as ‘indigenous American’ in the way we might refer to indigenous Nigerian Pentecostalism because the Indigenous peoples of America who are neither black nor

will continue to use it, but with an awareness of these nuances. The contemporary pentecostal case studies that I have engaged with in this research all belong to classical pentecostal denominations in Britain, some being historically related to their American cousins.⁶⁰

In the light of this, I will clarify the matter of capitalisation (and non-capitalisation) of the “p” in pentecostalism in this thesis. While I am focussing in this thesis on classical pentecostalism in Britain (and its history in the USA), I want to remain mindful of the breadth and variation of the movement around the world. I will therefore use an uncapitalised “p” when speaking in general terms about this historic and global movement, but also in reference to the pentecostalisms of specific places and times, such as ‘British pentecostalism’. This should not be read as an erasure of the distinctions between pentecostalism and the wider charismatic movement in Britain, who choose the title ‘charismatic’ over ‘pentecostal.’ I will also use an uncapitalised “p” to refer to specific strands or expressions within the broader pentecostal movement, such as classical pentecostalism or progressive pentecostalism.

1.3.2 Anthropology, Embodiment and Experience

In this thesis which will analyse pentecostal theology and ethics, the anthropological framing must allow for the naming and discussion of the sinfulness of humanity, without magnifying this over and against the knowledge that humanity was created by God and called ‘good’.⁶¹ For pentecostalism, its emphasis on holiness and sin, asserts a negative

white.

⁶⁰ Church of God in Christ in Britain arrived via Jamaica from the USA (COGIC), and the Church of God of Prophecy (COGOP) and New Testament Church of God (NTCG) have both come via the same route from the Church of God (COG). However, Assemblies of God GB (AOG) is not historically related to Assemblies of God (AG) in the same way although they share a name.

⁶¹ Genesis 1:31.

anthropology in which the sinfulness of humanity can be the overarching perspective. However, I have sought to draw on more positive anthropological frameworks from within pentecostal scholarship. Daniela Augustine, writing in the Eastern European Pentecostal (EEP) tradition resists the pessimistic anthropology of the Reformed tradition, instead focussing on ‘the transformation of the redeemed humanity in Christ’ and ‘the hopeful anticipation of its growing into Christ-likeness through the agency of the Holy Spirit.’⁶² The critique I offer of pentecostalism is not hopeless lament, but is held within this perspective in which the Spirit is ever working within believers and seeking to transform them into the image of Christ for the sake of all people and creation as a whole.

In Lisa Stephenson’s work, we find an articulation of a feminist pneumatological anthropology in which Stephenson critiques the fusing of ‘an ideology of Spirit empowerment with hierarchical anthropology, rather than allowing the outpouring of the Spirit to disrupt entrenched anthropological paradigms’.⁶³ This identification of the Spirit with the thwarting of hierarchical paradigms is core to my analysis of pentecostal anthropology in a broader sense. I have argued elsewhere that core to pentecostal global revivals is the Holy Spirit’s undermining of colonial dynamics and specifically caste hierarchies in India.⁶⁴ In this thesis, the matters of embodiment are so central because the hierarchical paradigms in the world at large - and also in pentecostal churches - are determined by sex, race and class as well as wider issues of embodiment such as sexuality and disability which I do not have room to do justice to in this thesis. While class is not an

⁶² Daniela C. Augustine, “Pentecost, empowerment and *glossolalia*,” *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, 11:4 (2011): 290.

⁶³ Lisa P. Stephenson, “A Feminist Pentecostal Theological Anthropology: North America and Beyond,” *Pneuma* 35, no. 1 (2013): 35.

⁶⁴ Selina Stone, “Pentecostal power: discipleship as political engagement,” *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 38, no. 1 (2018) 29-32.

inherited aspect of embodiment in the way gender and race are, there are certain embodied identifiers of class – such as regional accents or cultural norms - which cause people to be categorised within socio-economic hierarchies.⁶⁵ Therefore, class is important for discussions of body politics. In addition, the intersectional nature of class, race and gender inequalities means that poverty is not as detached from the biologically inherited markers of embodiment as we might imagine.⁶⁶ To reflect and speak theologically about experience from the point of embodiment-consciousness, means going beyond a focus on the ‘lived experience’ of spirituality or biblical suppositions.⁶⁷ Instead, speaking of experience in theological terms with an attentiveness to embodiment, demands awareness of the diverse ways in which people experience God, themselves, the community and the world at large, depending upon the form and positionality of their bodies within hierarchies. It is the questions which arise from these diverse embodiments, that we will attend to in this thesis.

1.4 The Researcher

The challenge of the insider/outside debate remains an important point in the study of religion despite the fact that some scholars consider it to be a redundant discussion.⁶⁸ A recognition of the need for insider perspectives, has been a positive move in fields such as anthropology and sociology which have historically been dominated by white males writing

⁶⁵ Marjana Johansson and Sally Jones, “Interlopers in Class: A Duoethnography of Working-class Women Academics.” *Gender, Work & Organization* 26, no. 11 (November 2019): 1528.

⁶⁶ Deborah E.S. Frable, “Gender, Racial, Ethnic, Sexual, and Class Identities,” *Annual Review of Psychology* 48, no. 1 (February 1997): 139-162; Gillian Raab, James Lewsey, Phil Eaglesham, Peter Craig, Kevin Ralston, and Gerry McCartney, “Mortality Differences and Inequalities within and between ‘Protected Characteristics Groups, in a Scottish Cohort 1991-2009,” *International Journal for Equity in Health* 14, (2015): 1-14.

⁶⁷ Alister McGrath, *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 1999) 3-4; David Hay, “Experience,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality*, ed, Arthur Holder (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2005) 419-441.

⁶⁸ Jeppe Sinding Jensen, “Revisiting the Insider-Outsider Debate: Dismantling a Pseudo-problem in the Study of Religion.” *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 23, no. 1 (2011): 30.

often patronising and racist accounts of ethnic groups, women and others.⁶⁹ More recently, the privilege of the 'insider' is more recently seen in the tendency for 'insider' and 'outsider' to be considered to correlate with 'knower' and 'not-knower'.⁷⁰ However, I would suggest that the researcher's relationship to the subject(s) of their research may transcend this dualistic categorisation, because in reality the researcher is impacted by many perceptions, ideas and imaginations that complicate this dichotomy. Instead of choosing between the two, I share the view that we should understand 'insider' and 'outsider' as a gradient where there can be more or less, rather than as a rift.⁷¹

In my own case, I would have some of the traits of an 'insider' in regard to classical pentecostalism. I was raised within the AOG and attended Mattersey Hall Bible College. However, my exposure to Catholic Social Teaching and Anglican Theology and Spirituality in the last seven years might cause me to be labelled an outsider by others. The gradient approach, allows me to acknowledge both the insider knowledge and the critical distance that has been afforded me, making the insider-outsider dichotomy ill-fitting.

It is an important task for any researcher is to be able to identify and declare one's positionality in relation to the topic of one's research, and to acknowledge the potential opportunities and risks of that position. I consider myself to approach this research as a womanist, who is 'triple concerned with herself, other black women, and the entire black race, female and male - but also all of humanity, showing an ever-expanding and ultimately

⁶⁹ Rosalind Shaw, "Feminist Anthropology and the Gendering of Religious Studies," in *The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion: A Reader*, ed. Russell McCutcheon (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 1999) 104-5; Adele E. Clarke "Situating Grounded Theory and Situational Analysis in Interpretive Qualitative Inquiry," in *The SAGE Handbook of Current Developments in Grounded Theory*, eds, Antony Bryant and Kathy Charmaz, (London: SAGE Publications, 2019) 3-4.

⁷⁰ Jensen, "Revisiting the Insider-Outsider Debate," 43.

⁷¹ Jensen, "Revisiting the Insider-Outsider Debate," 42.

universal arc of political concern, empathy and activism'.⁷² While feminists are concerned with gender, black theologians with race and liberation theologians with class, womanists recognise that all human beings are caught up in patterns of injustice which intersect with one another in many ways, including in relation to the earth itself. A consciousness of the various layers and intersections of injustice is core to my analysis of pentecostalism and of the contexts in which the movement finds itself. This womanist perspective is core to me as a black woman scholar from a working-class background who is committed to activism and scholarship which serves the 'least of these' within the church and in the wider world.

1.5 Methodology and Methods

1.5.1 Theoretical Frameworks

This is an interdisciplinary piece of research concerned with spirituality, theology and the practice of Christian ethics. In this section I will explain the approach I have taken in terms of a study of Christian spirituality with a womanist emphasis. In approaching this study of pentecostalism primarily as a study of Christian spirituality, we are not negating the deeply theological nature of this research. Rather we are clarifying that the starting point of our research is 'the lived experience of Christian faith and discipleship.'⁷³ These lived experiences are clearly theological; as Steven Land explains, spirituality is for pentecostals the 'fundament of all theology.'⁷⁴ It is out of pentecostal spirituality - encounter with God through the Holy Spirit - that theology is formed, and believers are empowered to live out particular ethical commitments as we will see. In order to frame the methodological approach I have taken in my research, I will draw on Sarah Schneider's "Approaches to the

⁷² Layli Phillips, *The Womanist Reader* (London: Routledge, 2006) xxiii.

⁷³ Arthur Holder, "Introduction," in *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality*, ed, Arthur Holder (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2005) 5.

⁷⁴ Steven Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993) 183.

Study of Christian Spirituality” and Linda E. Thomas, "Womanist Theology, Epistemology, and a New Anthropological Paradigm."⁷⁵

Schneiders highlights three approaches to the study of Christian spirituality which she sees not as competing but often interacting in all studies within this field. The historical approach is taken either by trained historians who study spirituality to better understand historical contexts, or historical spirituality scholars who are 'scholars of spirituality (not of history)' but 'find the historical approach particularly useful for their projects.'⁷⁶ The theological approach to the study of spirituality is characterised by a concern to interpret spirituality and organise their work through the 'framework established by Scripture, theology, and sacramental practice.'⁷⁷ Finally, the anthropological approach recognises spirituality as intrinsically human and thus focuses on the interactions between Christian spirituality and other non-theological disciplines such as 'the aesthetic, linguistic, psychological, or cosmological', wider issues such as ecology, gender and other spiritualities or religions.⁷⁸ The three approaches she outlines are deeply interconnected in my own research project across all chapters. I have taken an historical approach primarily in chapters 2 and 3 but also in chapter 4 where I present research into the heritage of the movement and trace the development of ideas and practices which are shared by contemporary pentecostals. The theological approach to the study of Pentecostal spirituality is evident in the particular focus on pneumatology, anthropology and public

⁷⁵ Sandra M. Schneiders, "Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality," in *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality*, ed, Arthur Holder (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2005) 15-33; Linda E. Thomas, "Womanist Theology, Epistemology, and a New Anthropological Paradigm," *Cross Currents* 48, no. 4 (98, 1999): 488-99; Mark J. Cartledge, *The Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2015).

⁷⁶ Schneiders, "Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality," 19-20.

⁷⁷ Schneiders, "Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality," 24.

⁷⁸ Schneiders, "Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality," 24.

theology which feature through the whole thesis in relation to both historic and contemporary pentecostalism. Finally, the anthropological approach can be seen through all of the chapters in which the concern for embodiment, the matters of social and political context, gender, race and class, features in the analysis of pentecostal spirituality historically and in the present.

Schneiders offers a helpful framework for the study of pentecostalism as Christian spirituality but the objectives of this research go beyond the study of encounter with God, to the matters of theology and ethics. Our main objective is not to end with a clearer understanding of pentecostal spirituality for its own sake, but to identify the theology which underpins and extends from said spirituality as well as to critique the ethical (read practical) implications for pentecostals in Britain and in the West more broadly. With this in mind, we will look to womanist methodologies and theoretical frameworks which offer resources for the theological and ethical concerns – particular concerning power and justice - which feature throughout this project. Womanist theological scholarship developed in the USA, initially through the work of Delores Williams, Katie Cannon and Jacquelyn Grant at Union Theological Seminary.⁷⁹ Through their work and that of the womanists who have followed them, religion and theology have been critically analysed, discussed and re-interpreted from the perspective of black women's lives and experiences with particular regard for the poorest.⁸⁰ Womanists share the critical perspective explained in the statement of The Combahee River Collective who state:

⁷⁹ The foundational texts in this field include Jacquelyn Grant, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist response* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989); Katie Cannon, *Black womanist ethics* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988) and Delores Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk* (New York: Orbis Books, 1993).

⁸⁰ Phillips, *The Womanist Reader*, xxiv.

'We believe that sexual politics under patriarchy is as pervasive in Black women's lives as are the politics of class and race. We also often find it difficult to separate race from class from sex oppression because in our lives they are most often experienced simultaneously. We know that there is such a thing as racial-sexual oppression which is neither solely racial nor solely sexual...We struggle together with Black men against racism, while we also struggle with Black men about sexism.'⁸¹

Rather than seeking to respond only to the dominance of whiteness, as per black theology, or to male power through feminism, womanists recognise that white patriarchy must be tackled through an intersectional approach. They recognise that the negative impacts of capitalism, ecological concerns, and issues of human life and identity such as sexuality should also be recognised in any theological vision for justice. As Linda Thomas explains:

'In a word, womanist theology is a theory and practice of inclusivity, accenting gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and ecology. Because of its inclusive methodology and conceptual framework, womanist theology exemplifies reconstructed knowledge beyond the monovocal concerns of black (male) and (white) feminist theologies. Such a reconstructed knowledge (e.g., an epistemology of holistic inclusivity, survival, and liberation) serves as a heuristic for the broader notion of recreating knowledge and thereby offers some elements for a theoretical conversation. Womanist epistemological insights suggest the importance of commencing with all who have been left out of reflection upon a society, both its past and present.'⁸²

For this reason, womanists centre black women (sometimes including Asian and Latina voices) in research and analysis as those who sit at the apex of these matters.⁸³

The bringing together of pentecostal studies and womanist ethics is not straightforward despite the fact that black women and women of colour more broadly have sustained and grown the movement since its earliest days. Yolanda Pierce, a pentecostal womanist scholar, summarises the shared perspectives and distinctives as follows:

⁸¹ "Combahee River Collective Statement," Combahee River Collective, accessed March 3, 2021, <https://combaheerivercollective.weebly.com/the-combahee-river-collective-statement.html>.

⁸² Linda E. Thomas, "Womanist Theology, Epistemology, and a New Anthropological Paradigm," *Cross Currents* 48, no. 4 (98, 1999): 498-9.

⁸³ Phillips, *The Womanist Reader*, xxiv.

‘Both theological systems emphasize personal revelation and the experiential in understanding God. Both employ a contextual understanding in reading and interpreting Scripture. Both insist that the work of the Holy Spirit is real, relevant, and available to believers today. Both affirm that the person of the Holy Spirit can equip, comfort, and empower “whosoever will.” Womanist theology, however, posits that theological work must also be grounded in the source material of the lived realities of everyday women. Womanist theology explicitly critiques white racism and sexism and other systems of patriarchy. And most importantly, womanist theology opposes all oppression based on race, sex, class, sexual preference, physical ability, and caste as contrary to the essence of the gospel message.⁸⁴

While my research does not focus purely on black women’s experiences and voices, I have conducted particular analysis of black women’s voices and practice in the thesis. Yet, I do not imagine that we can fully understand the realities of race, class and gender by attending solely to the lives of black women. A theological critique of embodiment and justice should indeed be considered inadequate if it fails to recognise, address and liberate the black women, however, it must also be expansive enough to include all those living under the weight of an unequal socio-economic system, all women and all others who living within oppressive realities socially and politically. In the structure of this thesis class, gender and race will feature in distinct sections but this should not be read as an indication that they should be understood as disconnected matters. I consider the womanist framework to be present in my triple-focus on class, race and gender in my analysis of pentecostal history, the sociological analysis of power within pentecostalism and in my theological critique. I have sought to highlight the inherent intersectionality of these justice matters for British society overall, and for certain groups in particular. Pentecostalism is a tradition sustained by women of global majority heritage around the world including in Britain,⁸⁵ and thus a critical

⁸⁴ Yolanda Pierce, "Womanist Ways and Pentecostalism: The Work of Recovery and Critique," *Pneuma* 35, 1 (2013): 25.

⁸⁵ Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 225-7; Elaine Foster, "Women and the Inverted Pyramid of the Black Churches," in *Refusing Holy Orders: Women and Fundamentalism in Britain*, eds, Gita Sahgal and Nira Yuval-Davis (London: Virago, 1992) 45-68.

analysis of embodiment, power and justice within this tradition in relation to its wider social and political context could undoubtedly be considered to be womanist work. I make brief mention of the matters of sexuality, disability and ecology on occasion, not because I consider them to be less important to the matters of class, race and gender, but simply to limit the scope of my argument while indicating where I see connections and areas for further work.

In summary, the methodological approach for this research involves both the study of pentecostal spirituality in its historical, theological and anthropological aspects, and the ethical commitments of womanist theological and religious scholarship. In the next section I will explain the specifics of the methods that I have used, including an outline of the case studies I have undertaken to explore contemporary pentecostalism in Britain.

1.5.2 Methodology in Practice

My research has involved a combination of qualitative methods including interviews, observations and spatial analysis and traditional text-based methods with the additional use of online data (such as websites and social media posts) and quantitative data analysis.

1.5.2.1 Case studies

Case studies were conducted of nine organisations associated with classical pentecostalism which are engaged socially (and in some cases politically) in England.⁸⁶ They are all

⁸⁶ I speak of Britain often in this thesis though I have conducted my research in England, partly because pentecostalism in England exhibits the richness of the wider British pentecostal story, and so the two are deeply connected. The other reason is because of the undeniable prominence of what is understood to be 'English' in terms of history, identity and culture, within the United Kingdom and what is understood by 'British'. An analysis and critique of English history, religion in England and theology in England, will therefore be significant for the whole of the United Kingdom and its habitants across the four nations, even if this is understood negatively. For a discussion of the construction of English and British identity see Catherine Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 147-8; Stuart Hall, edited by Kobena Mercer, *The Fateful Triangle: Race, Ethnicity, Nation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017) 142-3.

organisations and churches based in large English cities, with high rates of socio-economic deprivation to which they seek to respond in their ministries and community work.

Emmanuel Community Church International (ECCi) is an AOG congregation in the borough of Waltham Forest in North-East London, *Emmanuel Community School* (ECS) is a free school initiated through the leadership of a member of EECi and supported by the senior leaders and many within the congregation.

Spark2Life is a rehabilitation charity for young people who have been convicted of serious violence. It was founded by Dez Brown while he was serving a pastor at ECCi and has been supported by ECCi since its inception, though it functions as a separate entity.

Bringing Hope is a similar charity based in Birmingham, which works primarily with men who are at risk of being drawn into violence, and those who need rehabilitation after serving time in prison. Its founders were Rev Dr Carver Anderson an ordained NTCG pastor and Rev Robin Thompson who is ordained with the Apostolic Pastoral Congress, an African Pentecostal Denomination. Both remain joint Executive Directors of the charity.

The *Pentecostal Credit Union* (PCU) is the most significant financial institution run by pentecostals in Britain, and was founded by a COGIC pastor, the Rev Carmel Jones, in the 1980s. Its members today, are all members of pentecostal churches, or in some way connected through relatives.

The *Nehemiah United Churches Housing Association* (NUCHA) is the result of the merger of two Birmingham-based initiatives, one of which was founded in the 1980s by pentecostal pastors from the Church of God of Prophecy (COGOP). This organisation has addressed the housing needs of the most vulnerable in the West Midlands for around 40 years and continues to thrive.

Green Pastures is a social enterprise founded by AOG pastor Pete Cunningham through which churches buy houses which are offered to the homeless in their communities.

I have also drawn on shorter analyses of two large pentecostal churches in major cities in England, which will remain anonymous, where the challenge of arranging interviews and observations resulted in the need to find alternative methods to draw them into the research project through publicly available data.

1.5.2.2 Interviews and Research Ethics

This project was formally reviewed according to the University of Birmingham's ethical review process, before any research was undertaken. Interview participants were provided with an information sheet outlining the purpose of the research project and explaining the details regarding data storage, anonymity and confidentiality. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed and notes were taken during observations and spatial analysis. Interview data from staff who were not senior leaders or founders has been anonymised. Senior leaders would be known in their context and potentially to one another due to the details of their organisations, so participants were informed that anonymity would be difficult but could be organised. They all agreed to waive their right to anonymity, and all interviewees confirmed that the transcripts I shared with them were accurate representations of the interviews I conducted. I was able to create an 'atmosphere of mutual trust'⁸⁷ through introducing myself and maintaining a relaxed conversational style to interviews.

⁸⁷ Juliet Corbin and Anselm Strauss, *Basics of qualitative research: techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*, 4th ed (London: Sage Publications, 2015) 13.

For the majority of the cases (6) I conducted semi-structured interviews with senior leaders and occasionally relevant staff from lower levels. Interviews are known to have some limitations in terms of their capacity to reveal sufficiently deep and accurate accounts of events and motivations.⁸⁸ This may be even more true in the research of faith, spirituality and ethical behaviour where people may desire to represent themselves as faithful believers. Nevertheless, I chose to use semi-structured interviews which allow the researcher to maintain some consistency over themes, but also give participants the space to add in themes that they think are important.⁸⁹ The objective of the interviews I conducted was not to assess or critique the validity of their stories and reflections, but to listen out for points of overlap from which theories could be drawn about the nature of progressive pentecostalism in Britain. As per 'grounded theory' methodology,⁹⁰ I as the researcher sought to look for the ideas and theories which were emerging from the data rather than simply imposing my own theories upon the data.⁹¹ Interviews therefore were conducted with a strong narrative emphasis in order for me to gain some level of understanding of each person and their story as a context to their thoughts, beliefs and work. While specific questions were useful for some interviews in which the person needed prompting, others were freer flowing as they explained the details of their own stories of conversion to pentecostalism and of their work in communities. I allowed for this openness as well as asking some questions to clarify elements of their stories.

⁸⁸ Jennie Barnsley, "Grounded Theology: Adopting and Adapting Qualitative Research Methods for Feminist Theological Enquiry," *Feminist Theology* 24, no. 2 (January 2016): 112.

⁸⁹ Corbin and Strauss, *Basics of qualitative research*, 39.

⁹⁰ Grounded theory was is a qualitative research methodology developed by sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Chicago: Aldine, 1967).

⁹¹ Corbin and Strauss, *Basics of qualitative research*, 3, 6; Jennie Barnsley, "Grounded Theology: Adopting and Adapting Qualitative Research Methods for Feminist Theological Enquiry," *Feminist Theology* 24, no. 2 (January 2016): 12; Hendrik J. C. Pieterse, "The Grounded Theory Methodology to Conduct Content Analysis of Sermons and Interviews: Critique and Response," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 76, no. 1 (2020): 2-3.

I conducted fourteen interviews; Pastor Doug Williams and Pastor Anthony Hodgkinson, senior leaders at Emmanuel Community Church International; Dez Brown, founder of Spark2Life and two of his staff 'Rachel' and 'David';⁹² Mrs Titilayo Oluwatudimu, Lead Proposer and Director of Education at ECS; Mr Peter Lewis, Headteacher at ECS and Mrs Jackson the Community liaison officer; Rev Robin Thompson and Rev Dr Carver Anderson, co-founders and co-CEO's of *Bringing Hope*; Elaine Bowes, Head of Communications at the PCU and Shane Bowes, CEO of the PCU; Bishop Wilton Powell one of the founders of Nehemiah Housing Association (later NUCHA) and Bishop Llewellyn Graham the current Chief Executive of the NUCHA. All of the interviewees recognised their pentecostal faith and/or heritage as the core driver in their vocation and ministry in their communities, even though two did not indicate current membership of pentecostal churches.

Interviews were analysed using a manual coding method in which I was able to highlight the common themes which were prevalent across the board for progressive pentecostals, and then explore in more detail the various perspectives within those themes. Transcribing the interviews myself allowed me to immerse myself in the stories and perspectives again before I analysed them,⁹³ which allowed me to 'enter vicariously into the life of participants' once again.⁹⁴ In the initial level of analysis I colour coded the sentences, sections or paragraphs within each interview which related to the four themes which emerged: consciousness (of personal and social stories and needs) definitions and experiences of pentecostalism, theological reflection and theologies and practices of power.

⁹² All of the senior leaders I interviewed agreed to be named in the thesis as their identities would be easily identifiable but the names of staff who were not senior have been given pseudonyms.

⁹³ Sabine Kowal and Daniel C. O'Connell, "Transcription as a Crucial Step of Data Analysis," In *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis* (London: SAGE Publications, 2014) 64-78.

⁹⁴ Corbin and Strauss, *Basics of qualitative research*, 86.

I then went over each of the four themes in order to create sub-themes while comparing the different interviews and perspectives.⁹⁵ These four themes then served to inform the overall thesis but were also foundational to particular chapters. The ‘consciousness’ data was fundamental to my shift away from my initial focus on liberation and political organising towards a focus on the place of embodiment and experience within pentecostal spirituality and ethics. This is the fundamental sign of the ‘groundedness’ of my thesis, in that I was willing to be ‘open to serendipity and flexible’.⁹⁶ The three remaining themes were all most directive in chapters 5 and 6 where I outline progressive pentecostal theological frameworks and conduct my critical analysis of power within progressive pentecostalism in Britain.

1.5.2.3 Observations and Spatial Analysis

I took part in two formal observations throughout the study. As part of the case study at *Spark2Life* I observed a prayer meeting and staff meeting at their office. On my visit to ECS I was taken on a tour of the school which allowed me the opportunity for spatial analysis and I also observed a school assembly as part of my case study. Scholars recognise the importance of observations because ‘it is not unusual for persons to say they are doing on thing but in reality they are doing something else.’⁹⁷ However, in the case of the two observations I undertook, they confirmed and deepened what had been or would later be expressed in interviews. While it is clear that there can be a performative aspect to observations in which those being observed may seek to impress the observer, in general the observations and spatial analysis allowed me to gather a greater level of data. At *Spark2Life* particularly, I was able to gather data on theological perspectives by listening to

⁹⁵ Corbin and Strauss, *Basics of qualitative research*, 87.

⁹⁶ Corbin and Strauss, *Basics of qualitative research*, 9.

⁹⁷ Corbin and Strauss, *Basics of qualitative research*, 41.

prayers, and at ECS I was able to observe the ‘subtleties of what [went] on during interactions’⁹⁸ with children and staff, and also to analyse the setting in which the children were being cared for and taught.

1.5.2.4 Online Data: Social Media, Websites, Archives

Core to my research has been access to online sermons which I analysed in order to develop an understanding of the underlying theologies and ministry practice of progressive pentecostals. For the three church case studies I listened to a range of sermons preached on Sunday mornings over the course of 13 months (Sept 2017 - September 2018) and coded all of the sermons according to the main themes using their titles and scripture passages. I paid special attention to the place of classical pentecostal themes (e.g. personal piety, eschatology and separation from the ‘world’) within progressive sermons, and any potential introduction of social and political themes.

In addition to online sermons, I also analysed data taken from church websites and social media posts. This was particularly beneficial because of the theme of the study which is ethics and the public ministry of churches and organisations. What churches and organisations reveal (and sometimes do not reveal) online is often indicative of their preparedness for public engagement. The Covid-19 global pandemic has forced many churches to produce regular online content which made it easier to access church materials for analysis. The boost in online content was particularly helpful for chapter 6 in which my analysis of pentecostal responses to George Floyd’s murder is based entirely on online church services and social media posts. This analysis would have been significantly more complex without the move to ‘online church’. Social media posts are being recognised

⁹⁸ Corbin and Strauss, *Basics of qualitative research*, 41.

increasingly as important for research because as opposed to emerging ‘in a vacuum’ some suggest they should be ‘viewed as integrated into and as an integral part of society at large.’⁹⁹ For churches living under Covid-19 restrictions, social media acts as a mirror of what is happening within church life, as it inhabits the wider world.

Analysing primary historical data was made possible through the online *Consortium of Pentecostal Archives* held by the Church of God in which records of early pentecostal newspapers such as *The Apostolic Faith*, *Confidence* and *The Evangel*, were all located. The University of Southern California’s *Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Archive* provided access to additional sources such as *Assemblies of God’s Redemption Tidings*.

1.6 Thesis Contributions

It is my hope that this work will contribute primarily to the fields of pentecostal studies and to discussions of theological ethics. It seems to be crucial for pentecostalism to critique why as a movement it has not lived within the fullness of what baptism in the Spirit might mean for the church and the world. While it is important to recognise the inspiring and encouraging aspects of pentecostal history, the ‘spirit of truth’ would I imagine, call pentecostals to reckon with its own complicity in exclusion and social and political sin. I hope that this work will offer a challenge to the movement in this regard especially for those in the majority world who trace their roots to American and/or British pentecostalism, that they might avoid the errors of their forefathers and foremothers. I also expect the work to serve the wider charismatic movement beyond those who take the name ‘pentecostal’, who

⁹⁹ Anabel Quan-Haase and Luke Sloan, eds, *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research Methods* (London: SAGE Publications, 2017) 3.

exhibit similar inconsistencies in regard to the work of the Spirit in the human person and community.

In terms of contributions to theological ethics, this work is motivated by a deep love for humanity and the need to contend with the anguish and pain so often reinforced - and sometimes even created - by particular theological ethical perspectives. By putting forward a case for the recognition of embodiment - and particularly the trauma of embodiment - within pentecostal theology, I hope to ease the transition to more progressive places, especially for those who suffer in the midst of the world and the church. While we have focussed on the matters of class, race and gender in this thesis, I have carried within my mind, the plight of those who identify as LGBTQ+, those with disabilities, and the body of the earth which suffers under the weight of us all. I hope this thesis will help people to move more deeply into these scholarly and pastoral spaces with attentiveness, compassion and a deep desire for the flourishing of all of creation.

1.7 Thesis Structure

This thesis involves a journey which begins with pentecostalism's roots before Azusa Street, continues through its global history and then comes to rest with its contemporary manifestations in Britain with eyes turned towards an ever more global future.

In chapter 2, I argue that pentecostalism's roots in African traditional spirituality and Wesley's Holiness movement, contained the resources for an integrated spirituality which engaged the whole person and the whole of reality. Pentecostals' failure to retain these aspects of their heritage, prevented the movement from exhibiting a transformative and radical political faith.

In chapter 3 I argue that Azusa Street's pentecostalism is fraught by a tension between what I call *pneumatic dualism* and *pneumatic integralism*. In the former, the Spirit is understood to engage with the body in its physicality through Spirit-baptism and healing, but not in terms of addressing its social and political identities and trauma. In the latter, the Spirit is understood to recognise and speak to all aspects of embodiment including social and political oppression.

In chapter 4 I argue that for classical British pentecostalism – rooted both in mainly white working-class communities and in the majority African Caribbean churches – the overarching emphasis historically has been that of pneumatic dualism. However, I also highlight the minority who exhibited pneumatic integralism in their commitment to a socially active pentecostal faith. In the second part of chapter 4, I argue that the social, economic and political life of contemporary England is shaped by similar trends to those which impacted upon the contexts of classical American and British pentecostalism; class, race, and gender inequality.

In chapter 5 I argue that classical British pentecostalism has its own 'progressive' stream which is engaged in social and political work in England. I outline core theological frameworks which demonstrate both continuation and rupture in regard to the worldviews and theological emphases identified as 'classical'.

In chapter 6 I analyse progressive pentecostalism in England, as the locus of the pneumatic integralism due its capacity to address matters of embodied suffering, notably poverty. For progressive pentecostals, we can see signs of the integralism which allows for meaningful spiritual, theological and practical engagement with the realities of human struggle and experience as they pertain to embodiment. Progressive leaders exhibit a transcending of dualisms in their merging of experience and vocation, their understanding of

divine-human action, their embracing of 'secular' knowledge and their participation in interfaith ministry. However, some continue to exhibit a dualism which prevents them from maintaining a 'critical consciousness' of injustice within the church as well as in the world or an expectation of holistic transformative encounter with the Holy Spirit. The impact of ongoing dualistic frameworks is seen across the board for women who retain secondary status even in progressive pentecostal churches, on the basis of sex, and who can be overlooked in community engagement.

The thesis ends with chapter 7 in which I develop a pneumatic anthropology, in which a pneumatic integralism is paramount. By drawing womanist and feminist scholarship into dialogue with Paul's reading of the resurrection as a Spirit-event, I argue that the Spirit's retention of Jesus' scars post-resurrection may offer pentecostals (and the wider church) a framework for attentiveness to and solidarity with, those whose embodied experience is marked by oppression.

2 PENTECOSTAL HERITAGE: WEST AFRICAN SPIRITUALITY AND WESLEY'S HOLINESS MOVEMENT

2.1 Locating Pentecostal History

Histories of pentecostalism have tended to focus on Azusa Street as the sole starting point of the movement, sometimes disregarding the accounts of revivals elsewhere in the world.¹⁰⁰ Yet, scholars have brought to our attention revivals as early as 1860 in Tinnevely, India, and in Korea from 1903 which involved similar outpourings of the Spirit prior to the revival at the Azusa Street Mission (hereafter referred to as Azusa Street).¹⁰¹ Indeed churches like the 'Pentecostal Holiness Church' led by A.B. Crumpler were labelling themselves 'pentecostal' as early as 1898, almost 20 years before the Azusa Street revivals.¹⁰² Any telling of British pentecostal history must take into consideration the Welsh Revival of 1904, the Keswick Convention and the Catholic Apostolic movement, all of which took place before Azusa Street. Nevertheless, we do need to give attention what happened at Azusa Street in a specific way, because of its historic role in the global spread of pentecostalism, and particularly for us, its contribution to British pentecostalism. Azusa Street's significance does not depend on a chronology which erases or underplays revivals elsewhere; it is important because of its global impact. The fact that pentecostals from

¹⁰⁰ Joe Creech, "Visions of Glory: The Place of the Azusa Street Revival in Pentecostal History," *Church History* 65, no. 3 (1996): 409-10.

¹⁰¹ Allan Anderson, "*The Origins of Pentecostalism and its Global Spread in the Early Twentieth Century*". Lecture for the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, 5 October 2004, 2; Gary B McGee, "Pentecostal phenomena and revivals in India: Implications for Indigenous Church Leadership", *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 20:3, (1996): 113; Paul S. Cha, "Unequal Partners, Contested Relations: Protestant Missionaries and Korean Christians, 1884—1907", *The Journal of Korean Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (spring 2012): 23; Timothy Lee, "Born-again in Korea: The Rise and Character of Revivalism in (South) Korea, 1885-1988" (PhD Diss., University of Chicago, 1996); C. K. Lee, *The early revival movement in Korea (1903-1907): a historical and systematic study* (Zoetermeer, Boekencentrum, 2003) 106; Rene Monod, *The Korean Revival*, trans. Anthea Bell, (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1971) 4.

¹⁰² Vinson Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal, 1901-2001* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers: 2001) 107.

across Europe, Asia, Latin America the Middle East, Africa and the Caribbean can trace the development of their faith tradition back to or through the modest Holiness church at 312 Azusa Street, is no small matter. Azusa Street can be considered to be a catalyst for the global spread of pentecostalism even if it is not the sole location of its birth. Yet in order to tell a history of pentecostal spirituality and theology, not only its sociology, we must look back even further to pentecostalism's roots in both traditional African spirituality and Wesley's Holiness movement.¹⁰³ Pentecostalism has been and continues to be enriched by the cultural and spiritual norms of global communities, and well as involving people and theological perspectives from historic Christian traditions. The diversity of the movement's cultural, philosophical and theological influences makes the telling of pentecostal history both a rich and complex task.

The aims of this chapter are twofold. In the first instance, we will explore the heritage of classical pentecostalism by looking to African traditional spirituality and the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition. It would seem remiss of us to attempt to understand pentecostal spirituality as it relates to the body and to the matter of theologies and practices of justice without attending to the spiritual and theological roots of the movement. We will see in this first section that pentecostalism contains within its own history, resources as well as limitations in terms of the development of an integral spirituality that encompasses the body in all of its elements and provides the tools for radical political action. The second part of this chapter will involve a recollection of the history of Azusa Street, with attention to the social context and the politics of class, gender

¹⁰³ I use a capitalised 'Holiness' when speaking about the tradition as a whole being discussed here and an uncapitalised 'holiness' when speaking only about the Christian ethic. One can for example believe in the ethic of holiness, without being a 'Holiness believer' as such.

and race. I will argue that Azusa Street was a gathering which initially appeared to be a prophetic sign which embraced Africans, women and the poor in a political context where white supremacy, poverty and patriarchy dominated the world. However, while it continued to be a home for the working class, it was in fact deformed by racism and patriarchy, in contrast with the gift offered by its African and Methodist roots respectively.

2.2 Azusa Street's Roots: (West) African Spirituality and Wesley's Holiness Tradition

In order for us to critically engage with the spirituality and theology of Classical American pentecostalism and Classical British pentecostalism we must reach behind the Azusa Street revival to explore its roots. We are concerned with ascertaining which cultural traditions and philosophies shaped the classical pentecostalism of Azusa Street and especially in its spirituality and anthropological posture. In *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*, Walter Hollenweger notes three fundamental roots of pentecostalism; African traditional religion which he subsequently labels the 'black oral root', Catholic scholars which form a 'Catholic' root and the 'Higher Life' and social/political reach of Holiness Evangelists, labelled the 'Evangelical' root.¹⁰⁴ We are not going to thoroughly analyse these different roots, but this work does offer evidence that pentecostalism is influenced by a complex and sometimes contradictory set of values, worldviews and theological perspectives. Pentecostalism has been criticised for its lack concern for social and political life. Some have suggested that by aligning itself with 'fundamentalism and evangelicalism', 'the African emphasis on communal spirituality is replaced by an emphasis on individual

¹⁰⁴ Hollenweger describes the 'Black Oral root' as focussed on 'orality of liturgy' and 'narrativity of theology and witness' among other features (Chapter 3); the 'Catholic' root is due to the influence of Catholic thinkers on his doctrine of perfection and struggles with predestination (Chapter 12); the 'Evangelical' root is seen in the popularity of the 'higher Christian life' philosophy and its social and political ramifications (Chapter 14). Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Development's Worldwide* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997).

spirituality'.¹⁰⁵ However, I will argue in this first section of the chapter, that Wesley's Holiness tradition and African traditional spirituality are more nuanced than this reading suggests. I will argue primarily that the African heritage of pentecostalism can be defined as more than simply 'oral' and instead contributes an integrated worldview in which all of creation (including the body) has divine potential and divine intervention is expected in all aspects of life (including the social and political). However, we will also see that the spiritualising of public life and individualising of political issues can act as a stumbling block to political thought and action. I will then demonstrate that Wesley's Holiness tradition struggled with a tension between an integral and dualistic worldview in which some recognise the significance of holistic human experience and 'social holiness', while others limited holiness to the personal and religious. In the third section of this chapter, I will argue that the believers at Azusa Street exhibit these tensions and inconsistencies, as a group of generally poor and working-class believers of Holiness roots and mainly African heritage.

2.2.1 African Spirituality and Pentecostalism

Africa is a continent with a wide range of cultures and ethnic groups, and so speaking about 'African' spirituality is no less complex than speaking of 'European' spirituality. To do this well, demands significant nuance, attention to conflicting scholarly views and overall, more space than we have in this chapter. However, in order to discuss the African heritage of Pentecostalism, I will attempt to outline a few elements of African spirituality which we might take forward as we journey through this thesis. I will depend primarily on the work of John Mbiti, a Kenyan theologian whose *African Religions and Philosophy* was groundbreaking at its time and continues to be of great benefit to many fields of scholarship.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Lewis Brogdon, "African American Pentecostalism" in *Handbook of Pentecostal Spirituality*, edited by Adam Stewart (Illinois: University Press, 2012) 25-6.

¹⁰⁶ John S. Mbiti. *African Religions and Philosophy* (Oxford: Heinemann Educational Publishers, 1990), 2nd

Attempting to trace which (if any) elements of African culture were preserved through slavery and migration, is a momentous (and some would consider impossible) task which some have advised against.¹⁰⁷ However, it is important to examine African spirituality in order to understand its potential contributions to Pentecostalism in terms of worldview and culture and spirituality. We know that pentecostal ‘founding fathers’ William Seymour and Charles H. Mason were both sons of former slaves and thus an exploration of West African spirituality will bring us closer to understanding their cultural identities and spiritual norms.¹⁰⁸ While we are unable to know for sure which tribe or region the early black Pentecostals in the USA descended from, historians agree that the West Coast of Africa, occupied by the Yorùbá tribe among others, was the central point in the Transatlantic trade in Africans.¹⁰⁹ For this reason, in places I will speak in general terms about ‘African’ spirituality, where I am making contrasts to European spirituality and worldviews, and in others I will engage with scholarship that focuses specifically on Yorùbá spirituality. Jacob Olupona’s highly commended work on sacred city of Ilé-Ifè will be central to these explorations.¹¹⁰ Scholars have argued extensively that the ‘Africanness’ of the Azusa Street revivals can be seen in the orality of the movement, its retention of the ‘ring shout’ among other rituals, which I agree with.¹¹¹ However, I want to argue that one element of African

edition.

¹⁰⁷ Douglas Nelson, “For such a time as this: the story of Bishop William J Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival: a search for Pentecostal/charismatic roots” (PhD Diss., University of Birmingham, 1981) 8-9.

¹⁰⁸ Calvin White, *The Rise to Respectability: Race, Religion, and the Church of God in Christ* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2012) 16 and Nelson, “For such a time as this,” 243.

¹⁰⁹ Hence the name ‘slave coast’ which was used to refer to the West coast of Africa beginning from the modern-day Ghana through to Nigeria. See: Robin Law, *The Slave Coast of West Africa, 1550-1750: The Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on an African Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) 18.

¹¹⁰ Jacob K. Olupona, *City of 201 Gods: Ilé-Ifè In Time, Space, and the Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

¹¹¹ See Walter Hollenweger’s description of what he calls the ‘Black Oral Root’: ‘orality of liturgy; narrativity of theology and witness; maximum participation of the levels of reflection, prayer and decision-making and therefore a form of community that is reconciliatory; inclusion of dreams and visions in personal and public forms of worship; these function as a kind of icon for the individual and the community; an understanding of the body/mind relationship that is informed by experiences of correspondence between body and mind, the

spirituality that has been less acknowledged, is its integral worldview in which western dualisms are resisted and all of life is caught up in the spiritual and religious.¹¹²

In this section I want to outline a nuanced perspective on traditional African spirituality, in which we see both the transcendence of particular dualisms (sacred/secular) and the continuation of particular tensions (communal/individual) and binaries (male/female). These tensions, we will see later, are inherited by the pentecostals of Azusa Street. I will begin by arguing that African traditional spirituality operates with an integral worldview in which public life is also spiritual life as exemplified in the divine expectations associated with economic life in Yorùbá traditional religion. This suggests potential for radical political engagement. However, while the communal element of African spirituality is commonly highlighted by scholars, there is also a clear individualism that can undermine systemic and structural critiques of inequality. I will demonstrate that the body is valued as divinely made and healed, and is also central to divine encounter, especially in worship and ritual. However, the gendering of bodies within African spirituality involves some fluidity between male and female roles and power, but overall sustains a patriarchal framework.

2.2.1.1 Integral Worldview: Public Spirituality and Individualism in Community

In considering the nature of African spirituality in general, it is clear that the frameworks which are forged by Western philosophy are redundant. The division of sacred and secular, or indeed any notion of compartmentalising human life into work, worship, family etc is a

most striking applications of this insight being the ministry of healing by prayer and liturgical dance' in Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 18-19; Carol Tomlin, *Preach It! African Caribbean Pentecostal Preaching* (London: SCM Press, 2019) 3-4, 16-17, Alexander, *Black Fire*, 31, 35.

¹¹² The recognition of the African worldview as an important aspect of critical reflection on Pentecostalism is not unique to me (see Alexander, "Every Time I feel the Sprit": African retentions from African Spirituality" in *Black Fire*: 28-60 for a thorough discussion of African retentions in Pentecostalism). I will be emphasising the implications of what is understood as an African worldview particularly in relation to theological anthropology and public theology.

misnomer; all of life is spiritual. In John Mbiti's words 'wherever the African is, there is his (or her) religion.'¹¹³ This does not mean, that since all of life is spiritual, that sacred spaces or sacred times do not exist; there are ample opportunities for prayer, ceremonies and religious rituals. What it does mean, is that the divine can be encountered in the workplace, in school, while shopping or while gardening. We see signs of this in Jacob Olupona's research in the sacred Yorùbá city Ilé-Ifè, considered to be the centre point for any study of Yorùbá religious life. Olupona explains that in this city, the markets - which from a western perspective, we might consider to be significant public places for economic reasons - have religious and spiritual importance:

'Three traditional markets - Ojà Ifè, Īta Akogun, and Ojà Ayégbayú are sites not only of secular market activities but also of significant religious meanings and functions. Ajé, goddess of wealth and the market economy, maintains her abode in Ojà Ifè...market days are auspicious occasions when gods, spirits and humans are most likely to congregate...'¹¹⁴

It is clear that public spaces are sites in which spirituality is recognised as having influence and authority, but that public matters - in this case, that of the economic life, are sacred space for gods, goddesses and spirits. The goddess Ajé does not simply pass through the market, or attend in response to prayer or bidding, she abides in the market; this is sacred space that sits consistently under her authority. She is responsible for securing economic prosperity for the kings and their subjects, and at the annual Olójó festival, the king prays to her for the success of his kingdom.¹¹⁵ These gods and spirits are not bystanders but have the power to bless and cause one to prosper or to curse and cause the person to one to fail.

Spirituality and religious belief are so bound up in the community's life and rhythms that it is understandable that Mbiti goes as far as to suggest that for traditional religions 'there are no

¹¹³ Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 2.

¹¹⁴ Olupona, *City of 201 Gods*, 90.

¹¹⁵ Olupona, *City of 201 Gods*, 133-4.

irreligious people'.¹¹⁶ The market is a space of encounter and divine presence in which 'gods, spirits and humans' mingle, one enters as one person then upon entering the market, one enters 'religious' space, even without a conscious choice to be religious. The act of buying and selling is a religious act; permitted, empowered or undermined by the intervention of divine or other spiritual beings. All of life is spiritual.

The place of community within African culture in contrast with European and western cultures more broadly, is a point of debate for African philosophers despite the fact that scholars can assume that an emphasis on community over and against individualism is an inherently African trait.¹¹⁷ When exploring traditional African spirituality and culture, we find both an individualism in which one may determine one's own destiny, and a recognition that one's wellbeing also depends upon a community of both tangible and intangible beings. In the Yorùbá tradition, individuals are believed to choose their own personal 'ori' (destiny) as unborn children, which dictates their fortune, wealth, poverty, property or status.¹¹⁸ Poverty is often interpreted then, as the result of predestination due to a bad choice made before birth in the spirit realm.¹¹⁹ However, in addition to dealing with the impact of one's ori, a person must also defend themselves against the poverty that might be due to the negative interventions of witches or spirits. This will involve visiting a diviner in order to discern the cause and solution to their issue which often involves the individual gaining favour with the ancestors or with gods through sacrifice or ritual.¹²⁰ While there is public

¹¹⁶ Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 2.

¹¹⁷ Souleymane Bachir Diagne, "Individual, Community, and Human Rights," *Transition*, no. 101 (2009): 8-15; Ajume Wingo, "The Odyssey of Human Rights," *Transition*, no. 102 (2010): 120-138; Omedi Ochieng, *Groundwork for the Practice of the Good Life: Politics and Ethics at the Intersection of North Atlantic and African Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 2017) 10-12

¹¹⁸ Olupona, *City of 201 Gods*, 189.

¹¹⁹ Abosede Omowumi Babátúndé, "Orí and Elédàá in poverty conceptualization in traditional Yorùbá religion: challenging developmental and aid organizations' understandings of poverty," *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 29:3, (2017): 363.

¹²⁰ Babátúndé, "Orí and Elédàá," 371-2.

communal provision for market success by the divine, failure is interpreted as an individual problem which has consequences in one's private and public life. The solution is the individual's capacity to offer right sacrifices or their willingness to appease the ancestors or gods, rather than in critiquing the hierarchies or structures formed by humans. What we can draw from this, is that the focus of communal life, does not always extend into political consciousness. Individuals live in community, share in and are enriched by community, but critiques of the systems, structures and hierarchies which govern and impact upon the community's life, do not seem commonplace.

With these integral frameworks in mind then, the task of this thesis, which is to explore the spirituality, theology and public practice of pentecostals, seems ever more crucial. If all of life is spiritual, then any religion or spirituality which does not permeate the fullness of human life and experience (the economic, social and political) would not be considered worth having in comparison. This, is the point Mbiti makes when bringing Christianity (and Islam) into dialogue with African traditional religions:

'Unless Christianity and Islam fully occupy the whole person as much as, if not more than, traditional religions do, most converts to these faiths will continue to revert to their old beliefs and practices over perhaps six days a week, and certainly in time of emergency and crisis.'¹²¹

This raises an important point about holistic spiritual formation, which we will explore in depth as we go through this thesis. However, it is worth stating that the challenge and the contribution that traditional African spirituality brings to Christianity is to ask what difference this makes beyond 'sacred' (narrowly understood) places and times. Mbiti makes it clear in his own work that there are points of compatibility between Christianity and

¹²¹ Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 3.

traditional African religion that must be explored and highlighted.¹²² When it comes to the exploration of public pentecostal action which is our task, this African expectation of public spiritual encounter is surely one of them. African traditional religion pushes us to ask what contribution Christian spirituality - and in this case pentecostal spirituality - offers to the realities of our economic life and to all the other aspects of public life including social and political. It is this critical question, which we might recognise as the driver for African American Christianity more broadly, in which this integral perspective on faith and spirituality has been brought to bear on matters of social, political and economic life and particularly matters of justice. We will consider this theme in depth in the following chapter.

2.2.1.2 African Integral Spirituality and the Body

The second outworking of African philosophy which is important for the foundation of this research, is in beliefs about the body and particularly the place of the body in relation to the spiritual. The embodied ritual elements of African traditional worship are noted as being retained within pentecostalism, however I want to argue here that the centrality of the body is more than simply a display of culture, it makes a particular philosophical contribution. The centrality of the body to worship, and for the integrating of embodied experience through healing, are another display of the resistance of western dualisms in which the body is problematised. The integral worldview in which all of human experience (whether the private or the public) is caught up in the religious, extends to the body, its senses and experiences. African anthropologies share the dualisms we are familiar with in the West, in which a person is constituted through a combination of a tangible body and an eternal soul and/or spirit but the idea that they are in conflict, with the body being corrupt is less

¹²² John Mbiti, "Christianity and Traditional Religions in Africa" *International Review of Mission* 59, no. 236 (October 1970): 433-4.

prominent. On the contrary, the body is recognised as formed and healed through divine initiative and its senses and experiences are recognised as religious. In Yorùbá religious tradition for example, the supreme God Olódùmarè is recognised as the Creator and the most senior god is Obàtálá who is responsible for forming human bodies:

‘he is regarded as responsible for creating all varieties of human beings born on earth: beautiful, ugly, deformed or physically handicapped...Designing the human body, Obàtálá pays particular attention to the features of the head or orí - the nose, eyes, ears, mouth and face. A malformed mouth is caused by poor design.’¹²³

The Christian doctrine of God’s perfection makes the potential for God to ‘malform’ anything impossible, but in Yorùbá tradition these lesser gods can make mistakes or at least human beings can experience divine action as mistaken. The important point here, is the intentionality that is taken in the creation of each body, endowing each human body with particular value and divine significance. The particularities of the body are divinely designed not simply the product of biology or chance. The body’s divine formation is not only temporal as according to African tradition, even after death it is believed that bodies retain their identifying features and even imperfections.¹²⁴ The divine act in regard to the body is eternal.

In the time between physical birth and transition to the afterlife, the body is crucial to worship and it also healed through holistic attention to physical illness. The body is fully drawn into prayer as seen in the Yorùbá tradition during morning prayer to Obàtálá and Yemòó a god and goddess couple, where believers cite: ‘with my hands and with my legs

¹²³ Olupona, *City of 201 Gods*, 148.

¹²⁴ ‘For the majority of African peoples, the hereafter is only a continuation of life more or less as it is in its human form. This means that personalities are retained, social and political statuses are maintained, sex distinction is continued, human activities are reproduced in the hereafter, the wealth or poverty of the individual remains unchanged...Although the soul is separated from the body it believed to retain most, if not all, of the physical-social characteristics of its human life.’ Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 157.

(with my whole body) I salute you...May my legs never cease from coming to worship you.'¹²⁵

This is not simply a matter of the heart and mind, these internal elements of the person being drawn into worship, but hands, legs, and indeed the entire body. When a woman is possessed by a spirit in worship (which is a positive notion, akin to being 'filled by the Holy Spirit' for pentecostals) her body is taken over to extent that she is 'unaware of her conduct and utterances'.¹²⁶ The capacity to give oneself totally to the spirits in worship and prayer, endows one with spiritual status within the worshipping community.

Healing is a core part of African traditional religion and again exemplifies an attention to the body, which is holistic. The process of healing involves what might be more broadly understood as encompassing both healing *and* discernment. The role of healers is not simply to diagnose the physical illness and dispense medicines, they are religious leaders seeking to understand the source(s) of the illness.¹²⁷ Illness is understood in African as well as other global majority cultures as being the result of a person being out of sync with God, nature, themselves or others.¹²⁸ Once again adhering to an integral worldview in which the human encompasses body but also mind, emotions and social elements, healing involves discerning the source of an illness which is being manifested physically, but may be the result of spiritual, psychological or physio-social causes. Techniques used to bring healing to the person (including but not exclusively the body) can involve divination, counselling, sacrifices and herbal therapy but also therapeutic dance, prayer or invoking gods and ancestors.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Olupona, *City of 201 Gods*, 144-5.

¹²⁶ Oyeronke Olajubu, *Women in the Yoruba Religious Sphere* (State University of New York Press, 2003) 114

¹²⁷ 'Drs. Akinola and Adesanya stated that they used the psycho-social-cultural-physical-social-spiritual family model, which involved asking questions about clients' psychological, social, cultural, physiological and social interactions, spiritual stances, and families of origin, in order to garner detailed information concerning their conditions.' Mary Adekson, *The Yoruba Traditional Healers of Nigeria* (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2004) 76.

¹²⁸ Olupona, *City of 201 Gods*, 172, 183.

¹²⁹ Adekson, *The Yoruba Traditional Healers of Nigeria*, 82-86.

We can confirm from all of these elements that the integral worldview impacts upon the way in which the body is valued and attended to within African spirituality. When it comes to the gendering of bodies, African spiritualities model a kind of fluidity that offers us important resources for reflecting on the matter of power and gender which we will engage with later in this thesis, and so we will turn to this matter next.

2.2.1.3 Bodies and Gender

Scholars paint a complex picture for women in African traditional religions, involving signs of hope as well as admissions of patriarchy which demand further critique. Overall, it seems that the gendering of bodies as ‘male’ and ‘female’ does not necessarily lead to fixed roles but involves a certain level of flexibility in African traditional life whether in worship and ritual or in family or work.¹³⁰ The precedent for this more egalitarian opportunity for women is set, it seems, by the belief in female deities, spirits and ancestors whose presence is sought after and depended upon by the community at large. We have already referred to Ajé the goddess of wealth and the market economy, but there are many others among the pantheon of the sacred city of the Yorùbá, some who are even more famous than the male gods.¹³¹ One of the famous ancestors is the heroine Morèmi “the Great Mother” who according to legend, used her beauty and sexuality to win the heart of the enemy king of the Ifè-ìgbò and learn their military secrets. In turn, she shared them with her townspeople at Ilé-Ifè so they could be saved but had to sacrifice her only son Olúorogbo to the river as she promised she would give any great gift in exchange for the blessing to fulfil her mission.¹³²

¹³⁰ ‘The Yorùbá thus delineated roles for the female as well as for the male, but these were context bound and not rigid. Men in precontact Yorùbá society were engaged in farming, land clearing, iron smelting, house construction, and palm tree climbing. Also, men were hunters and warriors. Conversely, women were involved in food processing, harvesting, and marketing farm products, dyeing, and trading (Fadipe 1970).’ Olajubu, *Women in the Yoruba Religious*, 24.

¹³¹ Olupona, *City of 201 Gods*, 107.

¹³² Olupona, *City of 201 Gods*, 204-5.

The plot of the story centres around Morèmi's sexuality rather than the intelligence and strength often emphasised in the stories of male heroes, which is an indication of the patriarchal norms which continue to shape such a narrative. However, the embracing of a story in which a woman succeeds in rescuing her people, when men had failed, should not be underestimated.

The feminising of spiritual power through the incorporation of goddesses and female ancestors continues in the prevalence of priestesses alongside priests. Oyeronke Olajubu explains as an example that the presence of two cults in Yorùbá tradition, the *iya mi* cult which is primarily for women and the *oro* cult primarily for men:

'The *oro* cult was in charge of executing judgment sentences on culprits in the society. The *iya mi* cult, on the other hand, was concerned about the sustenance of the ritual powers on which the Yorùbá polity rested. Thus, we see here a manifestation of different powers, visible and invisible, neither of which is less potent. Further, it illustrates the dependence of both genders on each other for the maintenance of a balanced cosmic view.'¹³³

While Olajubu interprets this dynamic as one of mutuality and equal power, in practice, scholars have made it clear that patriarchy is still at work in tangible ways. Therefore, the segregation of men and women may incur practical challenges to the notion of gender equality. For example, the 'visible' authority that men have to judge and confer sentences onto the guilty, might easily impact upon the community including the priestesses, in a way that the 'invisible' ritual power that the women have may not. Nonetheless, the dependency of male and female on one another, while having equal power offers us a model, for the kind of egalitarianism that we will explore in the context of the Azusa Street Revival and contemporary pentecostalism.

¹³³ Olajubu, *Women in the Yoruba Religious Sphere*, 22.

2.2.1.4 Summary

We have considered the integral worldview of African spirituality in which the divide between the sacred/secular is absent, making public life, religious life. We saw that while the communal (social) emphasis of African traditional religion is emphasised, there is an individualism that undermines structural (political) critique. We have also recognised the centrality of the body in spirituality, and the ways in which the gendering of bodies offers some flexibility in Yorùbá tradition although patriarchy persists. These are the crucial elements of the philosophical and religious heritage of pentecostalism, for this thesis in which embodied spirituality and the matters of ethics and public theology are being brought into dialogue. In this next section, we will consider the second strand of pentecostalism's heritage, that of the Wesleyan tradition. We will see that this movement functions within a dualistic philosophical framework, which contrasts with the integral worldview we have just seen from the African perspective. Nevertheless, this does not totally undermine the potential for spiritual (and sacred) action to take place in the otherwise 'secular' public space.

2.2.2 The Wesleyan - Holiness Tradition: Perfection and Politics

The Wesleyan-Holiness roots of the pentecostal movement are important to note, because in them, we find another set of influences which have shaped classical pentecostalism, especially in the area of public theology and action. I have argued in the previous section that despite the gender-based and political limitations of the Yorùbá worldview, these African spiritual roots of pentecostalism contain the potential for an integrated framework for faith, spirituality and public life. In this section, I want to explore what the Wesleyan-Holiness roots of pentecostalism may offer to the matters of embodied spirituality and public theology. While 'social pressures, a new theological identity, and the changing nature

of its membership' may have caused the eventual shift of Wesley's Holiness tradition away from political concerns, for some years, it exhibited an integral understanding and practice of holiness which reinforced critical public theology and political action.¹³⁴ It helpful for us even at this stage to avoid 'racial reasoning' in which we might be tempted to believe that white theology and Christian traditions birthed in Europe or North America are inevitably bound to be colonial in maintaining oppressions of many kinds.¹³⁵ I will demonstrate here that within Wesley's Holiness tradition, we do find those whose holiness did not involve political life and thus allowed withdrawal and inaction on matters of justice, but on the other hand, we find those whose 'social holiness' led to political agitation and the work of social transformation. We will see the fault line that was inherited by the pentecostal movement and continues to shape classical progressive Pentecostalism in Britain today.

2.2.2.1 Wesleyan Perfectionism

As part of the Evangelical revival which took place during the mid-18th century believers across Britain experienced spiritual renewal in churches across denominational lines. John and Charles Wesley, members of the Church of England were among these believers, with John speaking specifically of his heart being 'strangely warmed', by the presence of God in 1738.¹³⁶ The tools or 'methods' of spiritual formation they had practiced and taught - bible study, prayer and fasting, and doing good to the poor - were now empowered further by a zeal for spiritual renewal and the preaching of the Gospel.¹³⁷ As Methodism grew, so did

¹³⁴ Randall J. Stephens, "From abolitionists to fundamentalists: the transformation of the Wesleyan Methodists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries," *American Nineteenth Century History* 16: no. 2 (2015): 159-60.

¹³⁵ Beckford names the risk of 'racial reasoning' but also goes on to explain the philosophical and political history of European racism, encouraging us to maintain a critical awareness of the white imagination, which has not escaped Christianity and its theology. See Beckford, *Dread and Pentecostal*, 67-94.

¹³⁶ John Wesley, *The Life of John Wesley* (London: Jackson and Hallday, 1856) 82.

¹³⁷ Wesley, *The Life of John Wesley*, 53-57.

John Wesley's influence as a preacher and teacher of preachers, not only in Britain, but through the missionaries who were sent around the world, and most notably to the USA.¹³⁸

A focus on holiness was core to John Wesley's preaching and specifically, the message that Christian believers were able to live out the perfection gained through faith in Christ and Christ's atoning work on the cross. The Holiness doctrine developed by Wesley put sanctification front and centre, assuring believers that perfection was attainable in this life.

As he explains in his *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*:

'This it is to be a perfect man, to be sanctified throughout: even 'to have a heart so all-flaming with the love of God as to continually offer up every thought, word and work as spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God through Christ.'¹³⁹

Though Christians will be tempted to sin: 'yet are they endued with power from on high, to trample it continually under foot, so that it cannot spring up to trouble them.'¹⁴⁰ While for Wesley, spiritual maturity takes place in stages which correlate to the natural life, 'some of the children of God being new-born babes; others having attained more maturity'; all believers are perfect in that they are 'born of God as first, not to commit sin...as secondly, to be freed from evil thoughts and evil tempers.'¹⁴¹ John Fletcher developed this doctrine further by connecting sanctification directly to the distinct and subsequent experience of being baptised in the Holy Spirit as he writes:

'Should you ask how many baptisms or effusions of the sanctifying Spirit are necessary to cleanse a believer from all sin, and to kindle his soul into perfect

¹³⁸ 'The number of preachers at the time of his death amounted in the British dominions to 313, in the United States to 198; the number of members in the British dominions was 76,968, in the United States, 57,621' Wesley, *The Life of John Wesley*, 258.

¹³⁹ John Wesley, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection as believed and taught by the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, from the year 1725, to the year 1777." The eighth edition. Dublin, 1797. Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale, 24.

¹⁴⁰ John Wesley, "Sermon VIII The First Fruits of the Spirit," in *The Works of the Rev John Wesley*, Vol 5 (New York: J&J Harper, 1826) 74.

¹⁴¹ John Wesley, "Christian perfection: a sermon, preached by John Wesley, M. A. Fellow of Lincoln-College, Oxford. London, 1741," Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale.

love, I reply that the effect of sanctifying truth depending upon the ardour of the faith with which that truth is embraced and upon the power of the Spirit with which it is applied...If one powerful baptism of the Spirit seals you to the redemption, and cleanses you from all moral filthiness, so much the better. If two or more are necessary, the Lord can repeat them.¹⁴²

For Fletcher, it is the Spirit that brings about this perfection in the lives of believers, leading to greater evangelisation and social transformation. The individual is transformed through sanctification by the Spirit, but this takes place within the community of the saints and for the sake of the church's witness in the world.

The clear dividing line between church and world, saint and sinner, holy and unholy is one of the most evident signs of the Wesleyan-Holiness contribution to pentecostalism. It is also the point at which there is the greatest divergence from what we have seen in African spirituality. For many Holiness believers, the spiritual life (for them, holiness) depends upon distinction of the sacred from the profane which can generate withdrawal, whereas for African traditional belief, spiritual life involves recognising all of life as sacred. The expectations for how a sanctified life must be lived are clear as is explained in the Methodist Society's general rules in 1800:

'All members of the society must continue to evidence their desire of Salvation, by doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind; especially that which is not generally practiced, such as taking the name of God in vain; the profaning of the Day of the Lord...They must avoid drunkenness; buying or selling spirituous liquors or drinking them unless in cafe's or extreme necessity; fighting, quarrelling, brawling; brother going to law with brother; returning evil for evil or railing for railing; the using of many words in buying or selling; the buying or selling of uncustomed goods; the giving or taking of things on usury, that is unlawful interest; uncharitable or unprofitable conversation; all foolish talking and jesting...'¹⁴³

¹⁴² John Fletcher, *Christian Perfection* (Nashville: E. Stevenson and F.A. Owens for the MECS, 1855) 29-30.

¹⁴³ *The nature, design, and general rules of the Methodist Societies. Established by the Rev. John Wesley. To which are added, the rules of the Band Societies.* 5. London, [1800]. Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale.

Further rules forbid:

'such diversions as cannot be use in the name of the Lord Jesus such as dancing, cards, plays, balls or horse races. None of which can be reconciled to the advice of the Apostles. The signing of songs or reading of those books which do not tend to the knowledge and love of God.'¹⁴⁴

Wesley's epistemological concerns regarding how we might know and experience God, as well as his openness to reason have been ascribed to the influence of Enlightenment thought.¹⁴⁵ However, it also seems that Methodism's juxtaposition of bodily social encounter and spirituality might also be attributed to the impact of Enlightenment thought. Some of these prohibitions, such as keeping the Sabbath and not taking the Lord's name in vain have clear biblical precedents and could be thus accepted by many. Yet others, we might consider to be cultural traditions, developed in a particular context of dualism in regard to human experience and life, and what constitutes as 'spiritual'. The view that social experiences like attending a play or human expressions as natural as dancing or jesting might be considered hindrances to spiritual 'perfection' seem to be based in a suspicion of the body and the bodies of others. It contrasts starkly with the African worldview we have just seen in which everyday seemingly nonreligious or unspiritual activities such as attending a market or going to work are recognised as spiritual and sacred.

Nevertheless, this strict division between the sacred and profane should not be taken to suggest that Wesley's Methodists advocated total withdrawal from the 'world' no matter how evil and full of traps it may be for believers. On the contrary, the very same document which forbids dance or attending a ball, commends members of the Methodist society to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and visit or help those sick or in prison

¹⁴⁴ *The nature, design, and general rules of the Methodist Societies*, 6.

¹⁴⁵ David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to The 1980s* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 1989) 100-15.

according to 'the ability which God giveth'.¹⁴⁶ It is to this element of the Wesleyan Methodist tradition, to 'social holiness' that we will now turn.

2.2.2.2 Socio-Political Holiness and The Case of Abolition

For Wesley's Methodists, 'perfectionism' or 'holiness' was measured by personal piety as we have seen, but also social care and even political action. This is seen most clearly in the Methodist support for abolition movements. In 1787 the Wesleyan - Methodist magazine published a 'resolution of the Society for the purpose of effecting the abolition of the slave trade' which had been agreed upon unanimously by the General Council. It states:

'That the traffic and slavery of the human species, is a direct violation of the precepts of true religion; in opposition to the principles of liberty, justice and humanity; and disgraceful in the extreme to every country by which it is encouraged, or even tolerated.'¹⁴⁷

It goes on to affirm 'That the African Slave Trade is such a traffic' and outlines plans to send a petition to government, to promote the cause further and to send funding to the Society in London working towards abolition. This statement illustrates a certain attentiveness to social and political life and particularly to the oppression being experienced by African peoples through the slave trade. They are moved by the plight of their fellow human beings to condemn the slave trade but also to act. They exemplify solidarity with the oppressed. John and Charles Wesley were leaders in cultivating Methodist support for abolition, preaching, rallying support for the cause even when it caused rifts with the Methodist movement itself.¹⁴⁸ The Free Methodists, African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church and African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ) Church were actively involved not only in speaking

¹⁴⁶ *The nature, design, and general rules of the Methodist Societies*, 6.

¹⁴⁷ "Resolution of the Society for the purpose of effecting the abolition of the slave trade." *The Arminian Magazine Consisting of Extracts and Original Treatises on Universal Redemption, Jan.1778-Dec.1797* 11, (04, 1788): 208-9.

¹⁴⁸ Daniel J Pratt Morris-Chapman, "John Wesley and Methodist Responses to Slavery in America," *Holiness. The Journal of Wesley House*, Volume 5 (2019) Issue 1: 40-1.

up against slavery, but in freeing slaves, serving as stops on the Underground Railroad in the US.¹⁴⁹ The AME and AMEZ churches are examples of the organisation and agency that Charles Wesley speaks of, with famous members including Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass.¹⁵⁰

There is one friend of Methodism who is also worthy of mention in this analysis of pentecostal heritage. Charles Finney, a Presbyterian revivalist, is credited with influencing Methodists in relation to the doctrine of Christian perfection.¹⁵¹ However, he also stands out as one who helped to cultivate the social and political conscience of the movement, and wider groups of revivalists. Finney recalls that on one trip to New York he made it his primary goal to preach the Gospel to the poor and he was 'anxious' to bring the matter of abolition to their attention. He explains that he 'so often alluded to slavery and denounced it that a considerable excitement came to exist among the people.'¹⁵² Finney is important not only in terms of his support of the abolitionist movement, but also because of the attention he paid to internal race politics of the institutions he was involved with. On being asked to take up a professorship at Oberlin college he made two stipulations, one of which related directly to then matter of racial discrimination, he states: 'we should be allowed to receive colored people on the same conditions that we did white people, that there should be no discrimination made on account of color.'¹⁵³ Finney explains that 'they had a great struggle to overcome their own prejudices and the prejudices of the community' but

¹⁴⁹ Alexander, *Black Fire*, 68; William B. Gravely, "African-American Methodism" in *The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies*, ed. James E. Kirby and William J. Abraham (Oxford Handbooks Online, 2010) 129.

¹⁵⁰ Gravely, "African-American Methodism," 129.

¹⁵¹ James E. Johnson, "Charles G. Finney and Oberlin Perfectionism." *Journal of Presbyterian History* (1962-1985) no. 1 (1968): 46, 49-51.

¹⁵² Garth M. Rosell and Richard A.G. Dupuis, eds., *The original memoirs of Charles G. Finney* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002) 272.

¹⁵³ Rosell and Dupuis, *The original memoirs of Charles G. Finney*, 282.

eventually they complied.¹⁵⁴ The Oberlin theologians went on to be a group responsible for popularising the notion that holiness involved action, making ‘social and political pioneering’ part of ‘religious experience.’¹⁵⁵

Despite this promising potential, it would be remiss of us to imagine that this stance of solidarity was taken by all or even most Methodist believers. These social and political aspects of Methodist faith and practice were stifled in Europe and the US as many resisted the abolitionist tendencies of the movement, particularly those in the Southern states of the USA. These tensions lead to various splits within the movement, including in 1884 between the Methodist Episcopal Church with its Southern pro-slavery members (MECS) and the Methodist Episcopal Church mainly in the North (MEC).¹⁵⁶ Even those leaders who agreed with the abolition of slavery and supported the idea of interracial churches, failed to outwork true equality in practice, with black believers often being segregated within the church and discriminated against.¹⁵⁷ Unsurprisingly, many black people left to form black Holiness churches where their dignity could be fully recognised and the antislavery stance of the earlier days could be re-established more fully.¹⁵⁸ It is to these black Methodist congregations that we will now turn, with a particular interest in the extent to which freedom from the oppression and cultural dualisms of their white brethren, allowed them

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 282.

¹⁵⁵ Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 183.

¹⁵⁶ Russell E. Richey, “Early American Methodism,” in *The Cambridge Companion to American Methodism*, Cambridge Companions to Religion, ed. Jason E. Vickers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) 44–62; Douglas M. Strong, “American Methodism in the Nineteenth Century: Expansion and Fragmentation,” in *The Cambridge Companion to American Methodism*, ed. Jason E. Vickers, 63–96.; Morris L. Davis, “Methodists and Race,” in *The Cambridge Companion to American Methodism*, ed. Jason E. Vickers, 281–95.

¹⁵⁷ Bishop Richard Allen, *The Life, Experience, and Gospel Labours of the Rt. Rev. Richard Allen. To Which is Annexed the Rise and Progress of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America. Containing a Narrative of the Yellow Fever in the Year of Our Lord 1793: With an Address to the People of Colour in the United States* (Philadelphia: Martin & Boden, 1833) 13; Strong, “American Methodism,” 66-7.

¹⁵⁸ Richey, “Early American Methodism,” 55-56.

to embody a more integrated spirituality, that would serve them holistically.

2.2.2.3 African American Methodism: Drawing on the African Integral Worldview

We have seen in the introduction to the section on African spirituality, that tracing the precise trajectory of traditional African beliefs, worldviews and practices is almost impossible, partly because of the nature of belief in general, but especially because of the disruption caused by the Transatlantic slave trade. Nevertheless, as we have sought to highlight the potential contributions of African spirituality to pentecostalism, we might also comment, even in speculative terms, on the potential retentions of African spirituality within African American Methodism. We saw that an integral spirituality in which all of human life and experience are spiritual was paramount to 'Africanness', despite the temptations to spiritualise particular public matters in a way that undermined critique and action. I also demonstrated that alongside this, was a recognition of the body as divinely made, and central to worship and spiritual ritual. It was also evident that the dualisms of male/female were less fixed than may have been seen in European or white North American communities. Using Bishop Richard Allen and the American Methodist Episcopal Church as an example, I want to argue in this section that the break away from white Methodism gave African Americans the room to fully embrace an integral spirituality and engage pragmatically with public life. I will argue that in this African American space, black dignity was asserted as well as the love of God for those who inhabited the world in black bodies. However, I will also suggest that the personhood of women was undermined in this space, in such a way that the flexibility that existed within African traditional cultures was not carried forward in the Church.

Bishop Richard Allen, the founder of the AME church, explains that as his preaching

ministry among the Africans, he saw a need to establish 'a place of worship for the coloured people'. He explains that two white church leaders in the city were 'much opposed to an African church, and used very degrading and insulting language to us, to try and prevent us from going on'.¹⁵⁹ Despite various oppositions they succeeded in establishing a congregation and building a church. A few key elements deserve to be highlighted. Primarily, we find evidence of a focus on giving space to the ministry of African people within the AME and its affiliated churches. The earliest articles of the church state that trustees and members may meet to approve the nomination 'one or more persons of the African race, to exhort and preach in Bethel church, and any other church or churches, which may hereafter become the property of this corporation.'¹⁶⁰ It is worth stating that this related to men for the most part, as Richard Allen's reluctance to authorise women preachers has been noted and he makes no mention of women leaders in his autobiography and story of the establishment of the AME church.¹⁶¹ Nevertheless, the focus on black preachers, narratives and theological reflection was crucial to black spirituality flourishing. Along with this, comes the second feature which we might consider to be the presence of a type of liberation theology as black experience is brought into dialogue with the scriptures and the Church. In 'An Address: To those who keep slaves, and approve the practice' Allen writes both a defence of the dignity of African people and a theological critique of slavery:

'I do not wish to make you angry, but excite attention to consider how hateful slavery is, in the sight of that God who hath destroyed kings and princes, for their oppression of the poor slaves. Pharaoh and his princes with the posterity of king Saul, were destroyed by the protector and avenger of slaves...'¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Allen, *The Life, Experience, and Gospel Labours*, 12.

¹⁶⁰ Allen, *The Life, Experience, and Gospel Labours*, 23.

¹⁶¹ Allen, *The Life, Experience, and Gospel Labours*; Dennis C. Dickerson, *The African Methodist Episcopal Church: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020) 10.

¹⁶² Allen, *The Life, Experience, and Gospel Labours*, 45-46; Richard S. Newman, "A Liberating Theology," in *Freedom's Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen, the AME Church, and the Black Founding Fathers*, 158-182 (New York:

By naming God the ‘protector and avenger of slaves’ he makes a uniquely African American theological claim in contrast to the white colonial theology in which God would be considered the supporter of the slave master. Allen describes the matter of slavery as spiritual and theological as well as social, political or economic. In this way he resists the African temptation to spiritualise slavery in ways which undermine pragmatic action. However, he also echoes of the expectation inherent in African tradition, that the divine (in this case the Christian God) is intimately involved in the matters of public life, which are spiritual matters. God then, may well be expected to intervene, as he has previously done, to ‘destroy kings and princes’. Thirdly, Bishop Allen matched this theology of liberation with action, through exercising public leadership personally, as well as promoting a civic role for the AME church and wider black community. His concerns here were not simply a matter of focussing on black uplift but of engaging African Americans in the wider body politic.¹⁶³ His vision, it seems was for a very public faith, and a route to citizenship not just within the community of heaven, but in the communities of the USA.

However, despite these signs of public progress, and theological advancement for black oppressed people, in practice women were not upheld alongside men. We see that the AME church embraces a patriarchal system of leadership, by stating that all changes to the articles of governance must be voted in by ‘two thirds of the regular male members of the church’.¹⁶⁴ Scholars have shown that across the Methodist movement, women enjoyed leadership in ways which were uncommon in mainline denominations serving as leaders and preachers as well as missionaries and leaders in social movements.¹⁶⁵ Women were

New York University Press, 2008).

¹⁶³ Newman, *Freedom's Prophet*, 128 – 57.

¹⁶⁴ Allen, *The Life, Experience, and Gospel Labours*, 22.

¹⁶⁵ Lacey C. Warner, “American Methodist Women: Roles and Contributions,” in *The Cambridge Companion to American Methodism*, ed. Jason E. Vickers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) 323.

ordained early within American Methodism with Helenor Davison being the first in 1866 although British Methodists did not ordain their first woman minister until 1973.¹⁶⁶ Within African American Methodism as seen in the case of the AME church, we find women being given secondary status, with their voices being redundant in the AME church despite the very clear spiritual roles that women had both in Methodism and in African cultural spaces as we have seen. Scholars have suggested that these occurrences within black Christian spaces were an attempt to gain 'white respectability' particularly in the eyes of white evangelicals who maintained male headship in the family and the church.¹⁶⁷ However, we have seen that patriarchy is not simple a white reality but has been common even in pre-colonial African cultures. Whether we choose to emphasise the role of white Evangelicalism, wider social gender constructs or the patriarchal aspects of African cultures, it may well have been a combination which led to the overriding of egalitarian approaches which would have welcomed women's contributions to leadership in religious spaces.

2.2.2.4 Summary

We have focussed in this section on Wesley's Holiness tradition as a foundation for the pentecostal movement. This heritage is important to understand as we seek to interpret the history of Azusa Street and the contemporary pentecostal movement in England today. We have seen that Wesley's Holiness tradition is fraught with conflicts and splits because of the fundamental divide between those whose holiness was personal and focussed on the spiritual life of the body, and those whose personal spiritual holiness involved social, public

¹⁶⁶ Warner, "American Methodist Women," 323; Jennifer M. Lloyd, *Women and the Shaping of British Methodism: Persistent Preachers, 1807-1907* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010) 273.

¹⁶⁷ Butler, *Women in the Church of God in Christ*, 36; Estrela Y. Alexander in *Philip's Daughters: Women in Pentecostal-Charismatic Leadership*, eds. Estrela Y. Alexander and Amos Yong (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2009) 3; Scott Stephan, *Redeeming the Southern Family: Evangelical Women and Domestic Devotion in the Antebellum South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008) 2, 4.

and even political elements. We have seen that even some of those who recognised a public and political role for Christian faith in tackling political issues in wider society, still failed to recognise their own complicity in racial discrimination in the church, leading to further splits. These divides and fractures are at once theological, because they are based in particular understandings of what salvation and sanctification involves for the church and discipleship, and socio-political because of the impact of wider human interests, power and privilege (or the lack thereof). It is possible to see, in the case of the Southern Methodists, for example, that their interest in maintaining their economic wealth through the enslavement of Africans took precedence over any biblical imperative for justice, over the teachings of the Wesley's or the cries of African women and men themselves. For these African people, who belonged to this movement, a holistic faith depended very often on them leaving white and mixed congregations, in order to embody a faith that was not deformed by white oppression and cultural frameworks.

It was at the Simpson Chapel Methodist Church, a black congregation within the racially mixed MEC, that William Seymour was converted.¹⁶⁸ He did not, interestingly, join the all black AME church in Indianapolis, which has been read as an indication of his commitment to interracial church.¹⁶⁹ We will see in the next chapter that Seymour's ambition to lead an interracial church faces numerous challenges, which stem from both a failure to embody the deepest forms of African integral spirituality, and to discern what kind of holiness, the Spirit might stir up in this new movement.

2.3 The Azusa Street Revival

Pentecostalism is a movement of humble roots and marginalised people, which has evolved

¹⁶⁸ Nelson, "For such a time as this," 160.

¹⁶⁹ Nelson, "For such a time as this," 161.

into a tradition of global and political significance. The history of pentecostalism - particularly in the case its Holiness roots - is not a story of privilege. Pentecostal history involves believers' struggles for life and freedom both within the movement and within its wider socio-economic and political context. The tensions and conflicts believers experienced were simultaneously cultural, social, political, theological and undoubtedly spiritual (in terms of their impact upon spirituality). In considering the history of pentecostalism, we will see that at particular moments the Spirit's power is noticeable in the churches' embodiment of distinct ethics which act as a powerful witness amidst the prevailing narratives in wider society. In contrast, we will also see that all too often pentecostals have simply continued to live according to the 'patterns of this world'¹⁷⁰ - maintaining the oppressions and power imbalances which characterised their contemporary national life. It is evident that being 'full of the spirit' does not always mean, that the church cannot simultaneously be full of racism and sexism.

We will conduct a thorough analysis of the cultural and philosophical tensions in the next chapter but here, we seek only to outline the story of the revival at Azusa Street. In this history of the revival, I will pay particular attention to the matters of class, race and gender as attentiveness to the embodied realities of believers deepens our understanding of pentecostal history, theology and spirituality. I will demonstrate that this revival happened among those Africans living in the shadow of slavery and seeking out a place of tangible freedom. We will highlight the political importance of the interracial element but critique the idea that the 'color line was washed away' as Frank Bartleman describes. I will describe

¹⁷⁰ Wording taken from Romans 12:2 'Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.' (NIV)

the openness to women's leadership as a sign of the positive retention from both Wesley's Holiness tradition and African traditional spirituality but note the argument that the restriction of women in the development of denominations may signal attempts to conform to the 'civility' of white Evangelical patriarchy.¹⁷¹

2.3.1 The Story of the Revival

We will take time to analyse the place of the body and human experience at Azusa Street in the next chapter. At this stage I want to make the case that the Spirit arrives into a context (both in terms of the people and the place) in which racial oppression, poverty, migration shapes human experience. The revival offers momentary relief to those whose lives are impacted by suffering, but is itself impacted wider political trends, undermining the work of the Spirit in the community.

In the early 1900s Los Angeles was a distinguished city in which people of different ethnic and racial groups lived together in greater harmony than was known elsewhere in the USA. W.E.B Dubois, on his visit to the city in 1913 describes it as a great place in which he saw integration, good housing for black people and the development of black businesses.¹⁷² It is for this reason that many people, particularly African Americans like William Seymour, travelled to the city to live, work and worship. In reality, many of the African Americans who travelled to Los Angeles did not experience the middle-class life DuBois witnessed. Overall the African American population were working class, many taking jobs as domestic and factory workers.¹⁷³ It was not only African Americans who travelled to Los Angeles in hope for a better life but people of colour who were migrants to the USA including Latinx and

¹⁷¹ Butler, *Women in the Church of God in Christ*, 36; Alexander, *Philip's Daughters*, 3.

¹⁷² W.E.B. Dubois, "Colored California", *The Crisis*, Aug 1913.

¹⁷³ Marne L. Campbell, "The Newest Religious Sect has started in Los Angeles": Race, Class, Ethnicity and the Origins of the Pentecostal Movement, 1906-1913." *The Journal of African American History* 95, 1 (2010): 5, 11.

Asian groups.¹⁷⁴ Many of the white people in Los Angeles were also recent migrants who had relocated from the Mid-west 'to enjoy their middle and declining years. They were the humble 'old-stock whites' who also faced socio-economic challenges, but 'carefully shunned' minority groups.¹⁷⁵

On arriving in Los Angeles with expectations of a better life than he had known in the South, William Seymour sought out opportunities for ministry. He very quickly faced hostility or at least uncertainty in several places due to him preaching what was now a fully-fledged pentecostal message including emphasis on divine healing, the imminent return of Jesus and glossolalia as evidence of the baptism in the Spirit.¹⁷⁶ However, eventually a group began to welcome him, and he conducted meetings in the home of Richard and Ruth Asbery at which point few visitors occasionally joined this initial group of black Holiness believers.¹⁷⁷ The beginnings of the revival start here and people are drawn to the gathering, meaning they soon outgrew the Asbery home. The group which included some members from the AME Church moved to 312 Azusa Street, a church which was built by the AMEZ church in 1888 but was being used for storage at the time of their move.¹⁷⁸ Regardless of the improved situation of some blacks in Los Angeles, 312 Azusa Street was located in a historically black area which was now industrialised, and the church itself was run-down, meaning they had to make seating out of planks of wood.¹⁷⁹ Regardless of these outward displays of poverty, it was into this church with its mainly black congregation that the Spirit

¹⁷⁴ Caroline Harris, "'Rivers of Living Water': The Movements and Mobility of Holiness-Pentecostals, 1837-1910," (PhD Diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2016) 3.

¹⁷⁵ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 62, 114.

¹⁷⁶ Nelson, "For such a time as this," 187.

¹⁷⁷ Nelson, "For such a time as this," 189.

¹⁷⁸ Nelson, "For such a time as this," 192.

¹⁷⁹ Stephen Shapiro and Barnard Philip, "Pentecostalism and the protolanguage of racial equality" in *Pentecostal Modernism: Lovecraft, Los Angeles and World-Systems Culture* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017) 81.

fell in 1906. As these Holiness believers began to pray that they might experience the infilling of the Spirit as recorded in the book of Acts, a revival began which would continue for around three and a half years and draw attention from around the world. As the writer of the *Apostolic Faith* newspaper writes in September 1906:

‘The power of God now has this city agitated as never before. Pentecost has surely come and with it the Bible evidences are following, many being converted and sanctified and filled with the Holy Ghost, speaking in tongues as they did on the day of Pentecost. The scenes that are daily enacted in the building on Azusa street and at Missions and churches in other parts of the city are beyond description and the real revival is only started, as God has been working with His children mostly, getting them through to Pentecost, and laying the foundation for a mighty wave of salvation among the unconverted.’¹⁸⁰

The gatherings featured spiritual expressions which have become synonymous with pentecostalism even if they do not exclusively belong to the movement. Prophecy, healings and other miracles, speaking in tongues and interpretation through the Holy Spirit were all common. Seymour had been studying theology under Charles Parham of Topeka, Kansas, who is believed to be the initiator of the doctrine that speaking tongues is the ‘initial evidence’ of being filled with the Holy Spirit.¹⁸¹ Seymour and many others eventually begin to question whether speaking tongues must occur in order to evidence the baptism in the Spirit, concluding that speaking in tongues was one of several signs including the fruits of love.¹⁸² Those who could not travel to Azusa Street, were impacted by what was occurring there. Many Christian leaders and missionaries were drawn to Azusa Street from around the

¹⁸⁰ “Pentecost has come,” in *The Apostolic Faith* (Los Angeles: The Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission, 1906) 1.

¹⁸¹ Leonard Lovett, “Black Origins,” 129; Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 55-6.

¹⁸² ‘Some people to-day cannot believe they have the Holy Ghost without some outward signs: that is Heathenism. The witness of the Holy Spirit inward is the greatest knowledge of knowing God, for he is invisible. St. John 14:17. It is all right to have the signs following, but not to pin our faith to outward manifestations’- William Seymour in *Reader in Pentecostal Theology: Voices from the First Generation*, ed. Douglas Jacobsen (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2006) 51.

world to see what was occurring. In many cases men and women travelled to Azusa St and brought the beliefs and practices of classical pentecostalism back to their home countries and communities across the entire United States of America and the world.¹⁸³ Ministers travelled from the Azusa Street Mission and brought pentecostalism back to their congregations and communities across Europe as well as in China, India, South Africa and the Middle East.¹⁸⁴

2.3.1.1 Pentecostalism and Race: ‘the color line is washed away’?¹⁸⁵

These are the common facts that we know of Azusa Street, but in the following sections I would like to draw our attention to two issues: the questions of race and gender. It is clear that for a time, Azusa Street saw what has been noted as a spiritually and also socially significant move of the Spirit which transcended racial barriers at a time of segregation in the USA. Lewis Brogdon, in his political reading of Azusa Street explains that the interracial aspect of Azusa Street was not accidental but an outworking of Seymour’s theological conviction as he sought out and attended churches that were racially diverse in the past.¹⁸⁶ For others, the Azusa Street revival represented a significant shift in the racial power dynamics, as a black man, the son of enslaved Africans, was recognised and accepted as a leader over white people.¹⁸⁷ This was not only important for African Americans but also for Latinos such as Abundio and Rosa Lopez who were drawn to Azusa Street because of its

¹⁸³ In a real sense, the Azusa Street revival marks the beginning of classical Pentecostalism and from there, the revival reached to other parts of the world’ Anderson, “The Origins of Pentecostalism,” 10.

¹⁸⁴ Allan Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity* (Oxford, Oxford University Press: 2013) 45.

¹⁸⁵ Frank Bartleman, *How Pentecost came to Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: 1925) 54.

¹⁸⁶ Brogdon, “African American Pentecostalism,” 23.

¹⁸⁷ ‘Azusa deserves special notice as the first US social movement in which whites not only collaborated with Blacks, but did so “under” the leadership of William J. Seymour and in spaces where Blacks initially outnumbered whites. Perhaps not until the late 1950s, with the rise of post-war Jazz culture and early civil rights movements, would whites accept leadership from Black Americans, at precisely the same time, interestingly enough, as the charismatic revivalism of Pentecostalism’s second phase.’ Shapiro and Philip, “Pentecostalism and the protolanguage of racial equality,” 65.

egalitarian characteristics.¹⁸⁸ V.V. Thomas has explained the significance of Azusa Street for Dalits in Kerala who were also drawn to pentecostalism because of the testimonies of the missionaries who had been to Azusa Street and witnessed the breaking down of racial barriers.¹⁸⁹ These meetings at the Azusa Street mission in its initial three years were not only spiritually and theologically important but also socially and politically significant.¹⁹⁰ In a world of intense and violent racism and segregation both within the church and wider society, these gatherings brought together people from different cultural backgrounds and contexts. One reporter describes how:

‘all classes of people gathered in the temple last night. There were big Negroes looking for a fight, there were little fairies dressed in dainty chiffon...There were cappers from North Alameda Street, and sedate dames from West Adams Street. There were all ages, sexes, colours, nationalities and previous conditions of servitude.’¹⁹¹

Nevertheless, despite the promising inclusivity demonstrated at these early gatherings, the spectre of prejudice and racism remained within the church. Seymour’s gatherings offered a prophetic demonstration of racial unity which drew virulent criticism from his former teacher Charles Parham. Parham was a Bible teacher and also a white supremacist who was a guest speaker at meetings of the well documented terrorist group, the Klu Klux Klan.¹⁹² The philosophy of white supremacy was engrained in the theological college where he taught, and Seymour was forced to sit outside the classroom separate from his white classmates.¹⁹³ Parham also seemed to want to develop this segregation within the church.

¹⁸⁸ Gaston Espinosa, *Latino Pentecostals in America: Faith and Politics in Action* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014) 58.

¹⁸⁹ V.V. Thomas, *Dalit Pentecostalism: Spirituality of the Empowered Poor* (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2008) 2.

¹⁹⁰ Brogdon, “African American Pentecostalism”, 20-2.

¹⁹¹ “How Holy Roller Gets Religion,” *Los Angeles Herald* (September 10, 1906) 7.

¹⁹² James Goff, *Fields White Unto Harvest: Charles F Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1988) 157, 211.

¹⁹³ Nelson, “For such a time as this,” 35.

Enraged by the bringing together of black and whites at Seymour's meetings, he wrote harsh polemics to ensure that racial divisions were normalised.¹⁹⁴ This view was shared by many who left the original denomination the 'Pentecostal Church of the World' that began through the gatherings at Azusa St, and started the Assemblies of God, a denomination for whites only.¹⁹⁵ While Frank Bartleman noted that the colour line had been washed away by the blood, it seemed that it was only hidden on a temporary basis.

These struggles to overcome white supremacy in order to establish interracial and inclusive churches, contains echoes of the struggle within Wesley's Holiness tradition. While holiness was shared as a doctrine across the board, an integrated understanding and practice of holiness which overcame prejudice and racism was not. Similarly, while the baptism in the Spirit may have been shared across racial divides for pentecostals at Azusa Street for a time, deep and long-lasting unity was not fostered. The Spirit ushered in a sign of life in the house of the Asberys and then at Azusa Street, in the midst of a political context of sin and death, yet the congregation of the Spirit-filled seems to resist this. We will explore these matters in detail in the next chapter, for now we want to note that the baptism in the Spirit at Azusa Street while empowering the individual, does not lead to the sustained socio-ethical transformation which was required.

2.3.1.2 Women in Pentecostalism: 'and your daughters will prophesy'?

While the racial history of pentecostalism has been turbulent and consistent with wider social and political injustices, the history of women within the pentecostal movement has

¹⁹⁴ 'The facts point to the Azusa Street mission as a role model, a predominantly black but interracial and intercultural church led by an African American'. Charles Parham is later quoted condemning Azusa Street: 'I have seen meetings where all crowded together around the altar, and laying across one another like hogs, blacks and whites mingling; this should be enough to bring a blush of shame to devils, let alone angels, and yet all this was charged to the Holy Spirit.' Allan Anderson, "The Dubious Legacy of Charles Parham: Racism and Cultural Insensitivities among Pentecostals," *Pneuma* 27, no. 1 (2005): 52-3.

¹⁹⁵ Anderson, "The Dubious Legacy of Charles Parham," 56; Brogdon, "African American Pentecostalism", 23.

also been complex. In the earliest days of the Azusa Street revival, it was not simply the 'washing away of the colour line' which testified that the Spirit had come, but that daughters also prophesied, as written in the book of Joel.¹⁹⁶ The history of pentecostalism depends on women as various scholars have shown. The roles of Neeley Terry who invited William J. Seymour to pastor the Holiness church in Los Angeles, and Julia Hutchins who made room for his ministry when he first arrived, have both been highlighted.¹⁹⁷ Estrela Alexander has drawn our attention to the stories of the many crucial women leaders including Lucy Farrow, Clara Lum, Florence Crawford, and Jennie Evans Seymour as well as lesser known figures such as Suzie Valdez and Rosa de Lopez.¹⁹⁸ These women were preachers and leaders of the early movement, administrators and missionaries. The leadership of Aimee Semple McPherson founder of the International Church of the Four-square Gospel has also been brought to the fore.¹⁹⁹ Harvey Cox is right in his summation that 'pentecostalism is unthinkable without women'.²⁰⁰

However, these early pentecostals were caught within a hermeneutical tension. On the one hand, they were encouraged by scriptures and their own witness of the Spirit's anointing of women, to embrace women's ministry and leadership as *The Apostolic Faith* states:

'Before Jesus ascended to heaven, holy anointing oil had never been poured on a woman's head: but before He organized His church, He called them all into the upper room, both men and women, and anointed them with the oil of the Holy Ghost, thus qualifying them all to minister in this Gospel. On the day of Pentecost they all preached through the power of the Holy Ghost. In Christ

¹⁹⁶ "Then afterward I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions." Joel 2:28.

¹⁹⁷ Nelson, "For such a time as this," 168.

¹⁹⁸ Estrela Alexander, *The Women of Azusa Street* (Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 2005).

¹⁹⁹ Harvey Cox, *Fire from heaven: the rise of Pentecostal spirituality and the reshaping of religion in the twenty-first century* (Reading: Addison-Wesley Publications, 1995) 123-8.

²⁰⁰ Harvey Cox, *Fire from heaven*, 121; Alexander, *Philip's Daughters*, 4.

Jesus there is neither male nor female, all are one.²⁰¹

However, while both theologically and practically it seemed clear that the same Holy Spirit gave gifts to both men and women, many pentecostals could not overcome patriarchal tendencies. In the various denominations that received their pentecost at Azusa Street, women were relegated to secondary status on the basis of particular readings of the biblical text. In *Word and Witness* the periodical of the Church of God in Christ (white), one writer states:

[Elders and pastors] must be true, tried and experienced men (not women) of God...No women were apostles, elders or pastors in the New Testament church but women "prophesied" in the church...[Women were] never put in authority in the church.²⁰²

While Jennie Seymour is listed as a trustee of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission, the proceedings for the consecration of bishops and elders refers only to men through the use of male pronouns.²⁰³ On the other hand, Seymour uses gender neutral nouns 'person' and 'persons' when giving instructions for the ordination of deacons, which some have read as a suggestion that the position was open to women.²⁰⁴ The effect of this, it that while women, their resources and ministry may have been foundational for the pentecostal revival at Azusa Street, they were not recognised as such in comparison to their male counterparts. This reinforces goes to the argument expounded by Lisa Stephenson that while we might celebrate the openness to women's ministry in pentecostalism, there is a clear division between the 'prophetic' roles women are offered (or 'ghettoised in' to use Cheryl Bridges

²⁰¹ "Pentecostal Notes," *The Apostolic Faith* (Los Angeles: The Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission, Sept 1907) 3.

²⁰² "Elders and Pastors," *Word and Witness* (Malvern, Arkansas: August 1912), 2.

²⁰³ William J. Seymour, *The Doctrines and Disciplines of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission, Los Angeles California* (Joplin, MI: Christian Life Books, 2000) 35, 135-53.

²⁰⁴ Seymour, *The Doctrines and Disciplines*, 153-7.

John's language) and the 'priestly role' that is reserved for men.²⁰⁵ Cheryl Bridges Johns speaks of the culture of 'exclusion and embrace' that the pentecostal movement has enacted since the outset.²⁰⁶ The outright rejection of women's leadership stands in contrast to what we have seen of the American Methodist tradition in which women were ordained as early as 1886 and the authority of priestesses in African traditional spirituality. However, the 'exclusion and embrace' paradox is reminiscent of what is seen at Azusa Street and the wider pentecostal movement at that time and beyond. In the case of black pentecostals from the South, Anthea Butler argues that restricting women's leadership was used as a strategy to emulate white 'civility' in which patriarchy was seen as morally and socially appropriate.²⁰⁷ This does not fit the pattern seen among some white Methodists who did ordain women as we have seen in the case of American Methodists. However we should also consider the potential impact of the wider Evangelical movement in the USA, particularly in the South, where patriarchy was considered the norm socially and theologically.²⁰⁸ The influence of the wider Evangelical movement might also explain why the AME church neglected the example of both their African heritage and the Methodist example, in order to form a black Christian patriarchy.

While we cannot be certain of why pentecostalism turned away from its potentially inclusive welcome of women, what we can see is that at Azusa Street the presence and leadership of women was supported in limited but important ways for the time. It is also key to note that the inclusivity that women experienced here, was due to the belief that the

²⁰⁵ Lisa P. Stephenson, "Prophesying Women and Ruling Men: Women's Religious Authority in North American Pentecostalism." *Religions* 2, no. 3 (2011): 414; Cheryl Bridges Johns, "Spirited Vestments Or, Why the Anointing Is Not Enough," in *Philip's Daughters*, 172.

²⁰⁶ Johns, "Spirited Vestments," 170-1.

²⁰⁷ Butler, *Women in the Church of God in Christ*, 36; Alexander, *Philip's Daughters*, 3.

²⁰⁸ Stephan, *Redeeming the Southern Family*, 2, 4.

Holy Spirit had qualified women through Spirit-baptism. Put in terms which relate our primary theme, is the Spirit's embrace of those people who inhabited the world in bodies gendered female, which opened up the possibility for their inclusion in the wider community on more equal terms.

2.4 Conclusions

In the first section of this chapter we have focussed on the spiritual roots of Azusa Street, which special attention to those public elements and matters relating to embodiment. The first section focused on the gifts of African integral spirituality which resists the dualisms of western philosophy, instead encouraging a holistic view of life in which everything is drawn into religious life. We also saw the individualism which is inherent within the communal cultural and spiritual traditions of the Yorùbá as an example. We then moved on to consider the dignity of the body in African traditional religion as being divinely made, and the centrality of the body in worship, and healing. We looked particularly at the ways in which the male/female binaries involved flexibility, in terms of spirits and ancestors as well as human interactions, but ultimately maintained patriarchy. We highlighted these core aspects of African heritage in order to argue that pentecostalism had within itself the cultural and spiritual resources to draw upon in the formation of their spirituality, theology and practice. Noting the nuances and limitations of traditional African spirituality is also important, because of post-colonial critiques which often suggest that individualism and patriarchy only appear in European cultural systems and spiritualities, meaning they would be eradicated through decolonisation. By recognising the potential for negative consequences of African traditional spiritualities, we remember the need for Christian theological critique on all cultures, philosophies and spiritualities. In pneumatological terms, we are acknowledging the need for the life of the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of Christ, for

all people.

We then moved on to consider Methodism as the other major heritage of pentecostalism, this time existing within the paradigms of dualisms and tensions. We saw that within the movement itself, the matter of holiness for some focusses purely on the religious narrowly understood, whereas for other, holiness is also social, political and public. I argued that the involvement of Holiness believers in the abolition movement was an example of the social and political aspects of holiness, which could have offered pentecostals with this Wesleyan-Holiness background, a model for sanctification that was public and political, rather than only private and personal. In considering the AME church and the ministry of Bishop Richard Allen, we saw that African Americans found ways to form a more integral faith that engaged with the reality of their experiences of oppression and worked towards liberation and public engagement. However, they also continued to resist the full recognition of women in these black spaces, indicating a loss of African cultural norms and a neglect of the example set by the wider Methodist movement. In the second section of this chapter we turned to the story of the Azusa Street revival, recognised the context of oppression, racial hostility and poverty that shaped the lives of the believers politically but also in the church. We saw that classical American pentecostalism was shaped by many of the same challenges which hampered the Methodist movement, particularly on the issue of race. On the contrary we also saw the openness to women's ministry as a sign that the new pentecostals, were able to draw on the positive aspects of their heritage as exemplified in Yorùbá traditional religion, and the Methodists recognition of women leaders.

This abbreviated history of classical American pentecostalism (which ultimately

feeds into classical British pentecostalism) raises some important critical questions for us to carry forward into the next section. The overarching theological question we are left with, is how to understand the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and specifically, what the Spirit's presence does within, to and through the human person. We are forced to reckon with the reality that despite the rhetoric regarding holiness and the power of the Spirit, holiness is not often seen in the relationships, perspectives and attitudes which would make the church distinctive from the world. The saints, though filled with the Spirit, continue to enact strategies of oppression and domination if not immediately than eventually. While the Holy Spirit seems to be inviting spiritually revived human beings into new ways of being, they seem to either miss or resist her call, and in some cases even stifle her work. In seeking to explore what might explain this, we must address the particular world of the Azusa Street believers, and especially how their personal experience of inhabiting the world in particular bodies which were racialised, gendered and classed in particular ways, might shape theological reflection and hermeneutics. This is not solely about religious experience confirming the biblical text, but about the ways in which socio-political experiences of the world (both one's own, and the awareness one has of others') can play into discernment of what the Spirit is saying to the Church and empowering her to be and do. Those Holiness believers who either themselves were blighted by the oppression of slavery or were conscious of the brutalities of slavery, did not hesitate to reflect theologically on those realities and seek their transformation in prayer and action. In turn, imagination regarding Christian mission expanded to involve the call to practice love and fight for justice not only to practice personal piety in relation to God and withdrawal from the world. Rather than considering the concern for holiness to be a barrier to public theology and action, it may instead be one of the biggest motivations. It is these questions of human experience, Holy

Spirit encounter and theological hermeneutics that we will turn to in this next chapter.

3 EARLY CLASSICAL PENTECOSTALISM: SPIRIT BAPTISM, THEOLOGICAL HERMENEUTICS AND POLITICAL LIFE

In the previous chapter we established that the spiritual and cultural heritage of the pentecostals at Azusa Street provided resources for a holistic approach to life and faith. We saw that the traditional African spirituality of some black Holiness leaders, encouraged a holistic worldview in which every element of human life was recognised as spiritual, and a space for divine encounter. We saw that within African traditional spirituality, the body itself was valued, healed and respected regardless of gender, but we also recognised the continuation of patriarchy, and the individualism which could be linked to the undermining of structural critique. We then analysed Wesley's Holiness movement, recognising the struggle between two perspectives on holiness; the prioritising of individual piety and the expectation that personal piety led to social transformation. Despite its struggles and inconsistencies regarding race, we saw that Holiness believers within Methodism were willing to practice 'holy politics' internally by recognising women's ministry, as well as enacting holy agitation in public life on behalf of the oppressed. We then looked directly at Azusa Street, describing it as a movement of working-class communities, who were mainly African American but with multi-racial elements. Despite this promising start, we contested the idea that 'the color line was washed away' for early pentecostals, concluding instead that it was simply hidden for a while. The same could be said of the patriarchal norms that re-emerged as churches and denominations were formalised, after an initial period of openness to women's leadership at the Azusa Street Mission.

Scholars have sought to describe the tensions which were evident at Azusa Street in various ways. Joe Creech focusses on the particular influences of individuals when he speaks of the conflict between William Seymour's 'egalitarian, ethical restorationism' and Parham's

'conservatism'.²⁰⁹ Grant Wacker focuses on the tension between the philosophical and the practical by opposing the 'primitive' (idealism) and the 'pragmatic' (realism) of the early movement.²¹⁰ I want to engage in an analysis of Azusa Street's theology and spirituality which is rooted in the conflict we have outlined in the previous chapter. The tension within Wesley's Holiness tradition between those satisfied with individual piety and those who sought socio-political holiness in addition, continued in Azusa Street. Rather than seeing an eradication of this tension through a holistic understanding of the baptism in the Spirit, we see instead, a struggle between what I am calling 'pneumatic dualism' and 'pneumatic integralism'.²¹¹ The expectation that the Holy Spirit is encountered primarily in religious and individualised experience such as spirit-baptism, healing or prophetic utterances is captured in 'pneumatic dualism'. The social, political and public aspects of embodiment, particularly in terms of class, gender or race are considered secondary concerns or altogether irrelevant to the Spirit's work. On the other hand, 'pneumatic integralism' maintains an expectation that encounter with the Holy Spirit will involve the public, social and political aspects of human experience as well as the personal and religious. This is the space in which we see the potential correlation between the African integral worldview and pentecostal movement and where the opportunities for public theology and ministry are located. The lack of this African philosophical heritage which would encompass all of life in the work of the Holy Spirit, as well as the negation of the Wesley's social and political holiness,

²⁰⁹ Creech, "Visions of Glory," 413.

²¹⁰ Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003) 10.

²¹¹ Integralism is a term used in political theology among Roman Catholics and Conservatives to describe the (often-fundamentalist) presence of religion in public life. My use of 'integralism' is opposed to this ideology, in that I am focussing on a 'pneumatic integralism' which is politically progressive, rather than conservative. By 'integralism' I seek to emphasise the free-flowing nature of the Spirit which transcends the sacred-secular, church-world dualisms, and recognise the work of the Spirit in the reordering (not upholding) of the status quo and its various class, race and gender-based oppressions. For an example of the Roman Catholic 'integralism' see Adrian Vermeule, "A Christian Strategy," *First Things* 277 (2017): 1-11.

undermined the chance for a pneumatic integralism which would have enabled a truly prophetic movement. The pneumatic dualism that prevails overall at Azusa Street undermines the 'holy politics' of the community of the saints and by extension, its prophetic witness to the world.

I will begin by exploring early pentecostal epistemology at Azusa Street, and will argue that in general, embodied encounter with the Holy Spirit, is limited to the physiological, individual and (narrowly understood) religious aspects of embodiment. In general, pentecostals did not recognise or attend to embodied knowledge as pertains to the social or political aspects of embodiment, such as the significance of race and gender, or experiences of poverty. Holy Spirit-encounter is restricted within a compartmentalised personal and ecclesial private sphere. I will look at this particularly as it relates to the unwillingness of the majority of black pentecostals to recognise and integrate black trauma and thus black liberation, into their understanding of encounter with the Holy Spirit. In the subsequent section I will argue that the same dualism emerged in the hermeneutics of early pentecostals. While pentecostals at Azusa Street enjoyed a Spirit-initiated and communal hermeneutical process, we will see that Seymour's condemnation of political reflection, undermines the depth of that discernment. On the other hand, we will also see that not all pentecostals took this position, with some engaging in critical theological reflection on political life, with varying levels of reflexivity regarding their own and the churches complicity in political sin. I conclude that we witness an 'anti-pneumatic' posture by some of the early pentecostals at Azusa Street who silence the social and political testimony of their

siblings and stifle the Spirit's holistic anthropological and political work at Azusa Street and the wider world.²¹²

3.1 Embodied Epistemology

In this first section, I want to focus on embodiment in pentecostal spirituality and particularly bodily encounter with the Holy Spirit. Bodily encounter could be considered one of the cornerstones of pentecostal epistemology because of the expectation that one can know the presence of God and filling of the Holy Spirit through feeling, not just through receiving intellectual knowledge. This matter of embodied spiritual experience is one of the areas in which the philosophical and cultural tensions of the movement come to bear.

We have spoken at length about the potential contributions of African spirituality to pentecostalism, namely an integral worldview in which the public space is spiritual space, and the embracing of the body in its fullness, into spirituality. We have seen that these elements are distinct from the dualisms of western philosophy which we saw exemplified to some extent in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition. Here, the sacred and secular were distinguished (and divided where possible), most directly in the case of the relationship between the church and world (except when the church sought to witness to the Gospel). Similarly, the body was viewed with suspicion and thus was controlled in order to aid spiritual flourishing. I want to suggest that Azusa Street is a space of negotiation between pneumatic dualism and pneumatic integralism, between individualism and communalism, and between religious and political experience. I will begin by arguing that Spirit baptism, healing and divine provision are individualised experiences even though they occur within

²¹² In earlier drafts I referred to this as "anti-pentecostalism," however, was convinced to adapt the language to "anti-pneumatic," while listening to Rodolfo Galvan Estrada III's paper at the AAR 2020 entitled "Redefining Racism as an Anti-Pneumatic Activity: Rereading the Spirit in the Gospel of John." This change of language to 'anti-pneumatic', I see as opening this critique up for wider Christian engagement, rather than limiting this critique to pentecostalism, which the anti-pentecostalism language does.

the context of community. While the embodied aspects of these experiences might be deemed an inheritance from African traditional spirituality, the individualising of healing and its reduction to the physiological signals a rejection of that heritage. The individualising and privatising of these aspects of pentecostal spirituality undermine the potential for public and social or political expression. I argue that Seymour's warning about the limitations of experience for pentecostal spirituality, and the threads of gnostic thought and disembodiment in early pentecostal thought, also limit their capacity for contextual theological reflection.

3.1.1 The Body Matters: Spirit Baptism and Healing

In the records of the Azusa Street revival, we find many examples of bodily encounters with the Holy Spirit. These include individual testimonies of being filled with the Spirit and stories of healing. These accounts have much in common with the spirituality of Yorùbá religions and African traditional spiritualities, as we have seen in the previous chapter. Scholars have demonstrated that these retentions from African traditional spiritualities within pentecostalism were made possible through the spiritual traditions which emerged as enslaved Africans found ways to interweave their own traditional spiritualities, cultural traditions and religious rituals with Christianity.²¹³ Lewis Brogdon highlights particular examples of African traditional retentions in pentecostalism being 'the ring shout, dreams, visions, trances, drums, healing and belief in spirits or in the spirit world'.²¹⁴ However, while the 'Africanness' of these embodied spiritual elements is clear, we can also see compatibility between embodied spirituality and revivalist expressions more broadly, and the cultural

²¹³ Antipas L. Harris, "Black Folk Religion, 104; Frederick Ware, "On the Compatibility/ Incompatibility of Pentecostal Premillennialism with Black Liberation Theology" in *Afro-Pentecostalism*, eds, Alexander and Yong, 194.

²¹⁴ Brogdon, "African American Pentecostalism," 21.

norms of Latinx and Asian ethnic groups.²¹⁵ For example, the oral nature of pentecostalism and its emotionalism have been linked to Dalit culture in order to explain why the movement grew so rapidly among the Dalits in Kerala from 1909.²¹⁶ Gastón Espinosa has also highlighted the centrality of healing and embodied spiritual elements for Mexican spirituality, which have been retained with Mexican pentecostalism.²¹⁷ While we have traced these elements through the African heritage of the many black pentecostals who made up the initial gathering, the embodied spiritual elements of Azusa Street's African-rooted pentecostalism were easily embraced by non-Africans because of the resonance with other indigenous spiritualities' and cultures. Bodily encounters were also consistent with the concerns for holiness and personal piety which were inherited from Wesley's Holiness tradition. In this section I want to argue that for the most part, encounter with the Holy Spirit empowered the individual in the midst of the religious community but did not transcend into public life. I will begin by addressing baptism in the Spirit, before then discussing healing and divine provision as moments of individual religious encounter.

3.1.1.1 Bodily Encounter: Spirit Baptism

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is described in ways which are tangible, suggesting a correlation to African and other spiritual traditions in which embodiment is central to encounter with the divine through ritual and worship. The body is important, because it is in the body that one encounters God. While African traditional spirituality speaks in terms of 'possession' during which the host is not conscious of what is happening, pentecostals are

²¹⁵ Harvey Cox labels these elements as 'archetypal forms of worship' which 'lie close to the surface in some cultures but are buried more deeply in others', Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 101.

²¹⁶ Thomas, *Dalit Pentecostalism*, 10, 111.

²¹⁷ Gastón Espinosa, "Brown Moses: Francisco Olazábal and Mexican American Pentecostal Healing in the Borderlands", in *Mexican American Religions: Spirituality, Activism, and Culture*, eds. Gastón Espinosa and Mario T. García (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008) 266-8.

often conscious of being 'filled' by the Holy Spirit.²¹⁸ In describing the experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit, one man writes, 'I could feel the infilling in my toes and all parts of my body which seemed to me to swell until I thought I would burst.'²¹⁹ The pentecostal believers do not simply believe that they have been filled because they have been *told* so, but because they have *felt* the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is experienced, rather than being known only in an intellectual sense. The Spirit is experienced not only by the individual being filled, but also by the community who witness that person being filled. The community are able to affirm the presence of God with and within that person, and this empowerment acts as a manner of restoring dignity particularly in the case of women we have seen, and racially oppressed groups.²²⁰

In addition to its sensory experience, baptism in the Holy Spirit is understood to bypass cognitive function in offering unique and supernatural abilities. Encounter with the Spirit does not end with personal sensations; individuals are equipped and empowered to act, and to act in ways that serve God and others. One person testifies that the Holy Spirit has given them supernatural abilities to write in 'unknown languages' and also 'the gift of playing on instruments.'²²¹ These practical out workings of the Spirit are interpreted as being related to one's calling in ministry and mission. The gift of speaking or writing in unknown languages were immediately associated with a calling to missions abroad and the preaching of the Gospel, and the need for instruments in worship is evident.²²² The

²¹⁸ Olajubu, *Women in the Yoruba Religious Sphere*, 114.

²¹⁹ "Receiving the Holy Ghost," *The Apostolic Faith* (November 1906) 2.

²²⁰ Stone, "Pentecostal power," 29-32; Candy Gunther Brown, "Pentecostal power: The politics of divine healing practices." *PentecoStudies* 13, no.1 (2014): 40.

²²¹ "The Old-Time Pentecost," *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906) 1

²²² 'The gift of languages is given with the commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." The Lord has given languages to the unlearned Greek, Latin, Hebrew, French, German, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, Zulu and languages of Africa, Hindu and Bengali and dialects of Indian, Chippewa and other languages of the Indians, Esquimaux the deaf-mute language and in fact the Holy Ghost speaks all the languages of the world through His children.' *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906) 1.

individual is empowered in these ways, to serve a divine and also communal purpose; it is not empowerment for individual elevation of personal ambition.

For some people, baptism in the Spirit is preceded by the exorcism of demonic spirits, which are believed to be spiritual beings, which tend to provoke bodily manifestations. In one report, demons being cast out of Spiritualists who attended Azusa Street went out 'crying with loud voices' before those people were then 'saved, sanctified and baptized with the Holy Ghost.'²²³ So it is not simply the Holy Spirit who is encountered bodily, within the pentecostal imagination, but all spiritual reality is experienced in embodied ways. Bodies matter as hosts for the Holy Spirit who fills the person during Spirit baptism, or they may indeed be hosts for demonic spirits.

There is little evidence overall that these encounters with the Spirit led to public and political consciousness and action. Spirit baptism and revival more broadly tend to be limited to the church and its members, with the spirit baptised, then focussing on individual piety and deeper spirituality. However, there is one story in which we see the integrating of revival with political and public concerns. In his history of the Church of God, Charles Conn describes a revival service in 1919, which resulted in funds being raised to open an orphanage for local children in Cleveland:

'a spirit of weeping swept the congregation during which a delegate arose and contributed one hundred dollars to help open an orphanage...other delegates arose to give or pledge various sums towards the immediate care of homeless children.'²²⁴

Though later than Azusa Street's revival (in 1919), this story of a Church of God meeting does offer evidence of classical pentecostalism's early openness to social engagement, even

²²³ "Counterfeits," *The Apostolic Faith* (December 1906) 2.

²²⁴ Charles W. Conn, *Like a Mighty Army: A History of the Church of God* (Cleveland: Pathway Press, 1977) 153.

in the midst of a revivalist norm. This connection between the spiritual revival and the revival of social concern is unlike what we see for the most part and adds some nuance to readings of pentecostalism which deny any social interest or concern due to its spirituality.

3.1.1.2 Healing of the Body

The healing of the body in countless accounts at Azusa Street, signifies to early pentecostals that the body matters to God. The casting out of spirits might be understood to be a core aspect of healing of the person, but there are also countless stories through *The Apostolic Faith* of healings of all kinds. This is underpinned by the view that ‘through Jesus, we are entitled to health and sanctification of soul and body’.²²⁵ In the September 1906 edition of *The Apostolic Faith*, there are accounts of healing of eyes so glasses are no longer needed, deafness, consumption, lung and heart problems are also healed along with asthma that has been going on for 20 years, legs damaged by tuberculosis and general bodily pain. As a result of these occurrences, people threw away glasses, medicines and crutches, sometimes without checking with a doctor beforehand.²²⁶ These expectations are set by the doctrine of healing promoted at Azusa Street by Seymour and others as seen in the *Apostolic Faith* of September 1906. There we find a long section detailing belief about healing which demonstrates a high view of the body in relation to soteriology, summarised in the use of the phrase ‘two-fold salvation for body and soul’²²⁷. There is also a high expectation of the realisation of healing even while awaiting the full realisation of the kingdom of God. They are not awaiting the Kingdom of God to receive their healing, but fully believe it is possible for them to be healed now, because the Spirit is present and working in their lives.

²²⁵ “Salvation and Healing,” *The Apostolic Faith* (December 1906) 2.

²²⁶ *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906) 1, 2.

²²⁷ “Pentecost with Signs following,” *The Apostolic Faith* (December 1906) 1

However, the healing work of the Spirit in the lives of believers is limited to the body in its physiological sense. It is healing granted to individuals in the context of a community, the body of Christ, being formed by the Spirit as the early leaders explain:

‘Through Jesus, we are entitled to health and sanctification of soul and body...Jesus prayed that the Father would keep us from evil, which means sickness and all the works of the devil. All sickness is the work of Satan, and we have just as much right to look to Jesus for the health of those bodies as for the saving and sanctifying of our souls.’²²⁸

The doctrine of healing is based on a Trinitarian model; God has promised that he will heal, Christ has made this possible by his atonement and the Spirit is present to bring it to fulfilment. Frequent assertions to scripture are made to explain why these views are held and the theology of healing explained in these ways.²²⁹

The expectation and experience of bodily healing has clear resonances with the healing tradition and rituals of African spirituality. However, one of the core differences here, is in the way healing of the body is compartmentalised from the other aspects of human wellness. We will remember that diviners in African traditional spirituality sought to understand the whole life of the person in order to discern the cause of their illness.²³⁰ Illness is understood in the context of African spiritual religions to be related to disorder between the sick person and God, nature, spiritual powers or human relationships.²³¹ This holistic understanding of sickness and wellness is missing from these early pentecostal testimonies, limiting the Spirit’s healing to the individual body without regard to the wider

²²⁸ “Salvation and Healing,” *The Apostolic Faith* (December 1906) 2

²²⁹ ‘Saved, baptised in the Spirit then healed’ or ‘sanctified by the Spirit and healed’ are almost always held together in testimonies and teaching. ‘God is able to heal - Ex. 15:26: “I am the Lord that healeth thee.” James 5:14; Psa.103:3; 2 Kings 20:5; Matt. 8:16, 17; Mark 16; 16, 17, 18. He must believe God is able to heal. “Behold I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is there anything too hard for Me”- Jer. 32:27’ ‘Sickness and disease are destroyed through the precious atonement of Jesus, O how we ought to honour the stripes of Jesus, for “with his striped we are healed.” *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906) 2.

²³⁰ Adekson, *The Yoruba Traditional Healers of Nigeria*, 76.

²³¹ Olupona, *City of 201 Gods*, 172.

social, political or relational pressures which may be impacting on the individual person. 'Evil' or 'works of the devil' are opposed to 'health and sanctification of the soul and body' in the statement above from *The Apostolic Faith*, but these seem individualised. There is no expectation for the kind of social healing needed to recover from the evil of slavery, although Seymour names slavery a 'great evil.'²³² The contemporary struggles of the pentecostals experiencing poverty, and the national realities of segregation and lynchings which principally impacted African American bodies are not mentioned in early pentecostal writings. These realities which did much harm to those who were poor and/or black caused much anguish and pain, but they are not drawn into this hope for healing by the Spirit. The work of the Spirit, as far as healing goes, cannot therefore be named holistic, when this dualism is evident.

3.1.2 Materiality and Divine Provision

Aside from being filled with the Spirit and experiencing healing, there are also early records of tangible experiences of the Spirit in stories of supernatural provision and answers to prayer. These are further signs of the materiality of pentecostal spirituality, though this time in ways which have impact beyond the body, even though only in terms of personal economic life. Early pentecostals share stories of miraculous provision from God, which were clearly important for a community of believers who were not wealthy but had ambitions to travel the world to preach the Gospel. In a similar way to the disciples in Acts, they depended almost entirely on faith and their hopes for miraculous provision. In the 1913 *Weekly Evangel* we find 'the Finnish Gold story' which begins with 'again and again our God let things be accomplished by His prophets and apostles which are far above the realm

²³² Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline*, 125.

of natural laws'.²³³ The story goes that a woman leader who was leading the building of a chapel was faced with an unexpected and 'unjust' bill but prayed to God for provision. She explains that Matt 5:40 came to mind and so she did not feel right to go to court 'over the Lord's work' but the reporter writes:

'She bowed in prayer over the table, spreading her hands out over the little heap of money, and prayed that God would indeed do as she believed He was leading her to ask. In simple child-like language she said "Lord Jesus, bless Thy money as Thou didst bless the loaves in the wilderness. I will put my loaves too in Thy hands and do Thou let them, with Thine, meet this need. Let this money cover the amount of this bill." ...Then she counted...and she noticed that there was now much gold, though there had not been much gold in the box.'²³⁴

These notions of supernatural provision have strong resonances with the Yorùbá tradition and especially the goddess Ajé to whom people offer sacrifice and prayer, for wealth and material success.²³⁵ However, rather than being for one's own family, or the community at large, these pentecostal stories relate to the individual in the context of their Christian ministry. We find in this story, the reluctance of the woman to take legal action even though she faced an 'unjust bill'. Instead she turns to scripture and prayer, which lead her away from the kind of pragmatism that depends one oneself. In this sense, she exemplifies Wacker's argument that the early pentecostals' 'primitive' expectation that 'the Holy Spirit did everything, and that they themselves did nothing' was grounded by their pragmatic everyday needs.²³⁶ This woman displays a deep trust that God will act in a tangible way in her circumstances, through the Holy Spirit who is present with her. Her expectation is not that the Spirit will simply baptise and heal, but that the Spirit will also provide the miraculous, even though this remains an individual experience. She is a woman of faith, but

²³³ "The Finnish Gold Story," *The Weekly Evangel* (Cleveland: Church of God, 1913)

²³⁴ "And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well," Matt 5:40 (NIV); "The Finnish Gold Story," *The Weekly Evangel*.

²³⁵ Olupona, *City of 201 Gods*, 90.

²³⁶ Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 14.

also one who is eager to display holiness when engaged in public life by refusing to go to court, in order to be faithful to the reading of the scriptures. Though this does not extend to the quest for justice in a political and human sense, her needs are met regarding her personal Christian ministry.

3.1.3 Caveats: The Limits of Experience and The Problem of Disembodiment

We have seen significant evidence that the embodied experience of the Holy Spirit has some commonality with African traditional spirituality, but that pneumatic dualism is still present. I want to end this section on bodily encounter by reflecting on two caveats; one which adds some nuance to our understanding of the place of the body for early pentecostals and the second which offers a complexity to our reading of bodily encounter. Firstly, while bodily religious experience is important, Seymour also addresses the potential risk of building faith around experience. Seymour offers a clear warning in *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Azusa Street Apostolic Mission*, where he writes:

‘Some people to-day cannot believe they have the Holy Ghost without some outward signs: that is Heathenism. The witness of the Holy Spirit inward is the greatest knowledge of knowing God, for he is invisible. St. John 14:17. It is all right to have the signs following, but not to pin our faith to outward manifestations.’²³⁷

This is clearly a departure from Parham’s theological stance, but more significantly, it is an important clarification to make for a movement that is so attentive to outward signs as proof of their faith and salvation. In *The Apostolic Faith*, Seymour speaks about love and other fruits of the Spirit, which broadens the sense of what the Spirit does in the lives of believers and the community at large. In one particular reference to Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians he reminds the believers that while spiritual gifts may be ‘done away’, ‘divine

²³⁷ Jacobsen, *Reader in Pentecostal Theology*, 51.

love never faileth'.²³⁸ In this way, he motivates them to what will be the longer process of formation that extends beyond the experience of spiritual gifts. Primarily, this is a helpful corrective to those who might be inclined to build their faith on signs, which will then cause faith to be undermined or even lost once the signs become scarce. In this way, this is a deeply pastoral instruction which prepares the believers for spiritual maturity. However, what it also does in a negative sense, is narrow down and internalise the Spirit's work, rather than broadening and expanding it in public and political ways. The alternative to the 'heathenism' which obsesses about outward signs like healings and other personal miracles, could have been an encouragement to justice and peace, rather than the personal 'inward' witness of the Spirit. It would seem that rather than rejecting the hope for outward signs, it is the nature and reach of those outwards signs (namely the individualised, religious) that might have been questioned.

Secondly, it is worth mentioning while we have seen the importance of the body within encounters with God, there are also moments in which the spiritual is seen to transcend material limitations. This comes through in one report of a man who describes the sensation of his soul and spirit seeming to leave his body and 'float in the air just above', which he considers to be 'baptism into the death of Christ.'²³⁹ Another woman speaks about being 'caught away in the Spirit' and then being brought back by the Lord who told her "If I can carry you around Los Angeles without a body, I can carry you to Oakland without a fare."²⁴⁰ While the body is notably important for early pentecostals, these instances remind us that in some instances, the body was understood to hinder certain spiritual moments or experiences, and so needed to be bypassed. These transcendent experiences may have

²³⁸ "The Promise Still Good," *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906) 3.

²³⁹ "Receiving the Holy Ghost," *The Apostolic Faith* (November 1906) 2.

²⁴⁰ "Pentecostal Faith Line," *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906) 3.

been interpreted through Paul's similar discussion of a man having an out of body experience and Philip being 'suddenly taken' by the Lord from one place and then turning up somewhere different.²⁴¹ However, they also speak to a kind of disembodiment based in a kind of Gnosticism, where the body is seen as a secondary state which higher spirituality must work around. In the same vein, another woman recalls the words of God to her as "I will baptise you with the Holy Ghost and your vile body shall be changed unto my glorious body never more to die."²⁴² The mention of a 'vile body' as God's own words, presents a more directly Platonic perspective in which the body is viewed as corrupt and evil and a hindrance to the spiritual life. In this dualism, the spiritual is elevated above the embodied and encounter with the Holy Spirit does not involve only filling or healing the body but moving the person *beyond* embodiment.

This notion of the Spirit causing a person to forget or move past one's embodiment or embodied reality is the point at which we can see the anthropological tension within pentecostal spirituality. In Spirit-baptism, the person is caught up in the Spirit's presence so much so that their tongue is taken over, and their bodies are swept up in an ecstasy which causes them to forget their wider troubles. That same body is touched and healed by the Spirit, in some ways, though its deeper troubles remain untouched. This struggle within pentecostal spirituality, between attentiveness to and denial of the body and its realities, is the basis for the theological tensions in which the matters of class, race and gender are considered to be distractions from the Spirit's work, rather than sites into which the Spirit

²⁴¹ "I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows— was caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell," Acts 8:39-40. "When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and travelled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea," 1 Corinthians 12:2-4.

²⁴² "A Blessed Experience," *The Apostolic Faith* (November 1906) 4.

might speak. The tendencies towards disembodiment in pentecostal spirituality I argue, threaten to negate the importance of theological ethics, social, political and public theology and practice. We will see this most directly in the matter of black trauma.

3.1.4 Black Trauma and the Problem of Pentecostal Dualisms

We have seen that overall, these early pentecostals exhibit a dualism within their pneumatology, in which the Holy Spirit is known in a primarily physiological and/or religious sense but without any relation to the politics of embodiment. We have also seen that the Azusa Street congregation was living with the reality of socio-economic inequality and particularly the impoverishment of people of all races, who inhabited the world in bodies which were disconnected from wealth. Equally, to speak of racism as an embodied reality in America at the time of Azusa Street, is to speak about violence against black bodies which were in the words of Kelly Brown Douglas, considered 'chattel' but also 'threat.'²⁴³ In this section I want to argue that the pneumatic dualism of Azusa Street's pentecostalism can be seen principally seen in the general refusal to integrate black trauma - as an embodied experience - with its 'embodied' spirituality. I suggest that Seymour himself should be considered a traumatised man in the midst of a traumatised people.²⁴⁴ Pentecostal spirituality offered relief to these African believers in the midst of their suffering, and this should be considered a blessing of the Spirit. However, the sacred-secular, body-spirit/soul perspective which shaped classical pentecostalism, undermined the integration and healing of racial trauma, and prevented pentecostal involvement in efforts towards black liberation. As many scholars before me have argued, these 'dualistic modes of thinking' have

²⁴³ Kelly Brown Douglas, *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God* (Maryknoll: New Orbis Books, 2010) 52-56, 50.

²⁴⁴ For a thorough argument about the nature of black trauma post slavery, see Joy Degruy, *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing* (Portland: Joy DeGruy Publications, 2005).

‘encouraged black people to downplay or even despise the materiality of the Black body’ – including, I would add the social and political aspects of that materiality.²⁴⁵ The determination to focus on the ‘spiritual’ over the ‘embodied, the ‘individual’ over the ‘political’, and the ‘sacred’ space of the church over ‘secular’ black networks for liberation, further exacerbated the trauma of Seymour and his black colleagues, and undermined the potential for a holistic theological imagination and for political action.²⁴⁶

We have noted earlier that Seymour was reluctant to speak of the present evils in tangible terms, despite the plethora of social and political ones at his disposal. In the Article A of the *Constitution of the Apostolic Faith Mission*, which Seymour writes, the third section reads: ‘There shall be no political discussions or any other discussions contrary to the law of God.’²⁴⁷ We can deduce that ‘political discussion’ did not refer so much to the matter of politics within the church, as he does engage in reflections on governance and race particularly what he calls the potential for a ‘race war’ within the church.²⁴⁸ We might suggest that politics for Seymour, includes direct discussions of the matters of public life including government policy, economic issues or the like. In his mind, these were not matters for the church to discuss, let alone to organise around or participate in. But why would this be the case? Primarily, we must be mindful of the trauma that black pentecostals like Seymour had experienced during and after slavery which was cultural as well as individual as Ron Eyerman explains:

‘As opposed to psychological or physical trauma, which involves a wound and the experience of great emotional anguish by an individual, cultural trauma refers to a dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social fabric, affecting a group of people that has achieved some degree of cohesion. In this sense, the

²⁴⁵ Reddie, *Working Against the Grain*, 18-20.

²⁴⁶ Though I am taking racial trauma as an example for the sake of this argument, I see a correlation possible with the traumas of forced-migration, poverty, and gender-based oppressions among others.

²⁴⁷ Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline*, 38.

²⁴⁸ Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline*, 30, 38, Article C and footnote.

trauma need not necessarily be felt by everyone in a community or experienced directly by any or all. While it may be necessary to establish some event as the significant “cause,” its traumatic meaning must be established and accepted, a process which requires time, as well as mediation and representation.’²⁴⁹

It would not be too much to consider that Seymour and other African Americans who had descended from enslaved people, had internalised certain traumas which impacted on their aspirations. While Seymour names the ‘race war’ of the pentecostal movement and laments the lack of spiritual equality within the church, he makes no mention of the wider ‘race war’ occurring in America, in which the church had been formed.²⁵⁰ In a context of multi-faceted oppression, it is understandable why he might take this approach. Spiritual equality within the holy community may seem more attainable than the dismantling of white supremacy and may have offered some relief in a world where social and political equality seemed impossible. While Dubois recognises Los Angeles as place of black advancement in 1913, the middle and upper-middle class African Americans were found primarily among the Baptists and Methodists.²⁵¹ The pentecostal churches on the other hand, welcomed those who were working class, primarily domestic workers, factory workers, farmers.²⁵² Azusa Street is the spiritual home not only of African Americans, but the poorest and most disenfranchised. These groups may not have been (either in their own perception or in reality) positioned to change the world that weighed so heavily upon them. For this reason, Wacker suggests that political disengagement in order to focus on what they *could* change (i.e. themselves, their families and churches) was in fact a realistic or pragmatic choice.²⁵³

²⁴⁹ Ron Eyerman, *Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 1–22.

²⁵⁰ Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline*, 30

²⁵¹ Dubois, “Colored California”; Cecil M Robeck Jr, “The Azusa Street Mission and Historic Black Churches: Two Worlds in Conflict in Los Angeles African American Community,” in *Afro-Pentecostalism*, eds, Alexander and Yong, 21-22.

²⁵² Campbell, “The Newest Religious Sect has started in Los Angeles”, 11.

²⁵³ Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 223.

The supposed pragmatism of this approach should be questioned in the light of the impact of such an approach which was seemingly sectarian and potentially undermined the kind of solidarity and organisation that was possible at the grassroots level. For black Christians in general, approaches to social action were varied and pentecostals were not unique in engaging socially without organising politically, but they did stand in the way of black organisations which they deemed 'secular'. The research of David Daniels III demonstrates that the first-generation pentecostals (from 1906-1942) built 'black civil society' by supporting communication through religious newspapers, organising associations, running education institutes and cultivating black cultural expression.²⁵⁴ These activities were crucial to the lives of the community, but were done in isolation from other groups which were working towards similar goals. Pentecostals had the opportunity to work together with the wider black community (including black Baptists and Methodists) through membership of lodges, which they generally rejected.²⁵⁵ Daniels suggests that the disapproval of lodges was practical as well as theological, as lodges required money that would otherwise have been directed to churches, but also that oaths of allegiance to organisations were seen as inappropriate for disciples of Jesus.²⁵⁶ However, despite these concerns, other black Christians recognised the lodges as playing an additional role to that played by the church, rather than seeing them as rivals. Many church leaders in the AME and AMEZ churches founded lodges in addition to their church-based ministry.²⁵⁷ In contrast, Daniels suggests that by opposing membership of lodges, early pentecostal leaders

²⁵⁴ David Daniels III, "Navigating the Territory Early Afro-Pentecostalism as a Movement within Black Civil Society" in *Afro-Pentecostalism*, eds, Alexander and Yong, 47-49.

²⁵⁵ These were specifically black freemason lodges working towards black community empowerment.

²⁵⁶ Daniels III, "Navigating the Territory", 51.

²⁵⁷ David G. Hackett, *That Religion in Which All Men Agree: Freemasonry in American Culture* (California: University of California Press, 2014) 161-3.

'blocked black pentecostal women and, especially, men from utilizing the array of resources provided by lodges for personal and racial advancement.'²⁵⁸ These organisations offered networks of support and strategy for people of African descent in a racially hostile world.²⁵⁹ There may be many reasons for pentecostal disengagement from black community networks, one significant one being the middle-class nature of these lodges and the membership costs which would have been a prohibitive factor for many of the poorer pentecostals. Yet, I want to reflect theologically on the sectarianism of pentecostalism, in contrast to other black churches at the time.²⁶⁰

On one hand, pentecostal rejection of lodge membership could be read admirably as a sign of faithful commitment to God. Arguably, despite their disadvantages, these believers continue to seek to be faithful to God by refusing to pledge allegiance to a lodge, an act that would easily have been seen as a betrayal of Jesus.²⁶¹ Yet if we view the question of lodge membership not solely as a concern about faithfulness to and love of God but as relating to love of self and neighbour, then we might use this case study in order to assess the practical implications of dualisms within the anthropological imagination of early pentecostals. It would seem that for some pentecostals, the choice to remain true to a church which itself was marred by anti-blackness and reject the chance to work together with those who shared their political interests as black people deserves to be highlighted. The lodges, I would suggest could have been interpreted as being engaged in the godly and even Spirit-

²⁵⁸ Daniels III, "Navigating the Territory," 52.

²⁵⁹ Paul L. Dunbar, "Hidden in Plain Sight: African American Secret Societies and Black Freemasonry," *Journal of African American Studies* 16 (2012): 624-5.

²⁶⁰ For example, the AMEZ church in contrast, was interweaved so closely with the Prince Hall Masons (the first African American freemason lodge) that James Walker Hood was concurrently the grand master of the North Carolina Lodge and bishop of the AMEZ North Carolina conference. Hackett, *That Religion in Which All Men Agree*, 157.

²⁶¹ Daniels III, "Navigating the Territory," 51.

led work of restoring the dignity of black people so scorned by the world. Yet the lodges' work is not recognised as such by early black pentecostals. Instead, the black pentecostals who struggle to integrate their embodied political experience as black people, with their powerful spirituality, choose to celebrate the latter and ignore the former. A disembodied spirituality is elevated along with the 'sacred' (often racist) pentecostal church over the 'secular' lodges doing the godly work of pushing forward black liberation. The sacred-secular dualism that shapes the pentecostal imagination can lead to an unrealistic optimism about what is deemed 'sacred', and thus a lack of critical reflection on the church as the sacred community. On the other hand, the dualism generates an unnecessarily pessimistic view of what is deemed 'secular' and a harsh criticism of the world. We will explore the basis for this reluctance to both reflect theologically on wider human experience, and to critically reflect on public as well as ecclesial life, from the perspective of hermeneutics in this next section.

3.2 Integrating Hermeneutics

We have addressed pentecostalism's epistemological focus on bodily encounter as shaped by 'pneumatic dualism' which expects individual religious encounter with the Holy Spirit, in terms of Spirit-baptism, healing and miraculous provision. However, we noted the absence of an expectation that encounter with the Holy Spirit might address social and political experience, particularly in terms of African experience of trauma post-slavery. We will now draw these themes into dialogue with the matter of pentecostal hermeneutics.

Though I have had to distinguish the matter of embodied spiritual experience from hermeneutics in order to find a way into the discussion, this should not be taken to signify a separation of these elements in theory or practice. Scripture and experience are linked in

that the scriptures are the cultivator of pentecostal imagination, in other words they tell the believers what they might expect to experience of God. Personal experience, in William Kay's words has a 'verification role' in relation to the scriptures; believers know the bible is true because they have experienced a continuation of what it declares, in their own lives.²⁶² However we have noted that at Azusa Street, religious experience was prioritised over social and political experience. This is not only due to the Spirit's action in baptism, healing or provision, but because the actions of the Spirit are interpreted in these limited ways, due to the particular hermeneutical lenses that pentecostals brought to the text. These lenses were shaped by a dualistic perspective in which the Holy Spirit was understood to be concerned with the spiritual and religious over all else. For this reason, we might contest John McKay's argument that pentecostal hermeneutics is 'prophetic' due to its focus on 'shared experience'.²⁶³ Rather, the prophetic was undermined because of its lack of attentiveness to the shared experiences which were not explicitly religious. Early pentecostals were caught in cycle of limited expectation of the Spirit due to limited readings of the scriptures. However, those who managed to break out of the cycle to broaden their hermeneutic did so, as they integrated political experience into theological reflection and encountered the voice of the Holy Spirit there.

3.2.1 Pentecostal Hermeneutics: The Spirit's Work

For pentecostals, the Holy Spirit is the initiator of Christian formation and the scriptures offer the basis for interpreting the work of the Spirit in the world. While we have seen that pentecostal epistemology involves bodily encounter, we also recognised Seymour's

²⁶² William Kay, *Pentecostals in Britain*, 107, 117.

²⁶³ John McKay, "When the Veil is Taken Away: The Impact of Prophetic Experience on Biblical Interpretation," in *Pentecostal Hermeneutics: A Reader*, ed. Lee Roy Martin (Leiden: Brill, 2013) 66.

corrective that salvation is not a 'feeling' but 'real knowledge' by the Holy Spirit.²⁶⁴ This contrast Seymour makes between 'feeling' and 'real knowledge' betrays a tension even within Seymour himself. *Feeling* it seems, may be linked primarily to experience, but there is also *knowledge* that is in some ways more real, based undoubtedly, in the scriptures. We see this logic in his reasoning for why he rejects speaking in tongues as the only evidence. He among many others had experienced this, but when held up to the testimony of scripture, he falls short of agreeing with Parham:

'we don't base our faith on (speaking in tongues) as essential to our salvation. Someone will ask, How do you know when you will get the Holy Ghost? He, the Spirit of Truth, will guide you into all truth (John 16:13). The gift of the Holy Ghost is more than speaking in tongues. He is wisdom, power truth, holiness.'²⁶⁵

This 'real knowledge' or truth of God is gained through the scriptures and theological reflection, guided by the Holy Spirit and those anointed to lead and teach. We see this in the 'Questions Answered' section of *The Apostolic Faith* in which people from the church at Azusa Street are able to ask questions which are shared in community and answered by the leaders. It is an open and transparent process of discernment, in which various people get to ask questions, answer or submit testimonies of what they see God doing. One man asks, 'do we need to study the Bible as much after receiving the Holy Ghost?' and Seymour replies 'Yes; if not we become fanatical or many times will be led by deceptive spirits and begin to have revelations and dreams contrary to the word.'²⁶⁶ Seymour takes on the role of teacher here, by drawing them to the scriptures not as a secondary matter after an encounter with the Holy Spirit, but as a foundation to encounter with the Holy Spirit. For these classical

²⁶⁴ 'Salvation is not feeling; it is a real knowledge by the Holy Spirit, bearing witness with our spirit...Some people to-day cannot believe they have the Holy Ghost without some outward signs: that is Heathenism. The witness of the Holy Spirit inward is the greatest knowledge of knowing God, for he is invisible. St. John 14:17. It is all right to have the signs following, but not to pin our faith to outward manifestations.' Jacobsen, *Reader in Pentecostal Theology*, 51.

²⁶⁵ Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline*, 82.

²⁶⁶ "Questions Answered" *The Apostolic Faith* (October 1907) 2.

American pentecostals at Azusa Street, the scriptures are the vehicle through which God communicates to God's people, they are the boundary and basis for discernment and theological formation.²⁶⁷

However, it is also clear that in certain cases, the pentecostal community were willing to blur the boundaries, due to encounters with the Spirit which pushed them beyond what might have seemed obvious in the scriptures. One area is in the acceptance of women leaders and preachers despite Paul's admonition that he does not 'permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man'.²⁶⁸ Women's baptism in the Holy Spirit was considered to be evidence that the Spirit was making no difference between male and female and thus women were accepted in many ways as equals to men, although certain caveats were made.²⁶⁹ John Christopher Thomas considers this to be a particular element of the pentecostal hermeneutic in which the church's experience of the Spirit's work precedes any consideration of scripture, in other words 'the interpreters moved from their context to the text'.²⁷⁰ While in the case of women, there was a shift away from this approach in formal denominational life, this willingness to be moved by the Spirit to a more progressive position, somewhat past the text, is an important one. In this, we see that the work of the Spirit at Azusa Street includes a life-giving and energising quality that moves the Church

²⁶⁷ This an important area of difference for Pentecostals and the broader charismatic movement. Reports from the Charismatic renewal of the 1970s and the Toronto Blessing of the mid 1990s often include descriptions of Holy Spirit encounter which can include a range of expressions such as barking like dogs or finding gold teeth, which as they have no biblical basis, would be viewed with scepticism by most classical Pentecostals. See Margaret M. Poloma, "Inspecting the Fruit of the "Toronto Blessing": A Sociological Perspective", *Pneuma* 20, 1 (1998): 43 and Frank Macchia, "Guest Editorial: The "Toronto Blessing": No Laughing Matter", *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 4, 8 (1996): 5.

²⁶⁸ 2 Timothy 2:12.

²⁶⁹ Seymour refers to 'men and women' being receivers of the word of God and of 'wisdom to execute the power of the word', but declares 'all ordinations must be done by men not women'. Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline*, 26, 81, 110.

²⁷⁰ John Christopher Thomas, "Women, Pentecostalism and the Bible: An Experiment in Pentecostal Hermeneutics," in *Pentecostal Hermeneutics: A Reader*, ed. Lee Roy Martin (Leiden: Brill, 2013) 85, 89.

forward in ways which shift unequal power dynamics (to some extent) towards a more inclusive end. There is a sign here that the Spirit's life-giving work can take place in the midst of a wider politics of oppression, within the life of the church. The early pentecostals demonstrated an openness to the unexpected work of the Spirit as they read the bible and worshipped together.

3.2.2 Spiritual Knowledge

Openness to the work of the Spirit is the priority for early pentecostal believers, and particularly, an openness to what the Spirit may speak and do through the scriptures. The bible is the vehicle for spiritual formation as Seymour explains, when speaking of 'real Bible salvation': 'the object and end of all the precious scripture is that a definite work may be wrought out in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.'²⁷¹ It is, he continues, not a matter of 'theory or contention over different passages of scripture' but God's plan to 'implant his own nature - love, in a fallen race'.²⁷² The work of the Spirit sanctifies and forms believers through the scriptures, by enlightening the mind of the reader as they read them. It is not simply through their cognitive processes that these early pentecostals expect to come to their understanding, it is through a spiritual experience. For some, the dependence on academic or rational thought might even hinder the revelation of truth, as one report describes:

'they laid aside all commentaries and notes and waited on the Lord, studying his word and what they did not understand they got down before the bench and asked God to have wrought out in their hearts by the Holy Ghost.'²⁷³

On the one hand, the presence of commentaries and notes signals an awareness that the Bible is not easily understood and so additional resources are crucial to understanding it.

²⁷¹ "Bible Salvation," *The Apostolic Faith* (November 1906) 4.

²⁷² "Bible Salvation," *The Apostolic Faith* (November 1906) 4.

²⁷³ "The Old-Time Pentecost," *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906) 1.

While we cannot judge the content or quality of these commentaries, their use refutes the idea that early pentecostals modelled only a 'common sense and supernaturalistic rationality'.²⁷⁴ There is an admission here that the scriptures need to be contextualised for the reader. However, in laying them aside to '(wait) on the Lord', they are making a contrast between the two processes. There is a sense that one in fact must choose between a critical intellectual engagement with the scriptures and a Spirit-enthused pedagogy 'wrought' by the Holy Spirit; one cannot have both. They opt for the approach Marius Nel suggests was common among early pentecostals whose hermeneutics were shaped by readings of 1 John 2:27:

Because they have been anointed by the Spirit they have knowledge (ὁμοῖς χρίσμα ἔχετε ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ οἶδατε πάντες), as 1 Jn 2.20 states, and the anointing (of the Spirit) that they had received from him abides in them (ὁμοῖς τὸ χρίσμα ὃ ἐλάβετε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ μένει ἐν ὑμῖν), and so they do not need anyone to teach them (1 Jn 2.27).²⁷⁵

This suggests a very high theology of the Spirit's work in which the Spirit could effectively impart knowledge in a supernatural manner, without one having studied or learned from other humans. While this approach has been viewed as pentecostalism's stubborn anti-intellectualism even in contemporary times, it seems rather to be a spiritualising of the intellectual rather than a rejection of it. Study is crucial, but not study which depends solely on 'human knowledge' rather than the knowledge that comes from the Spirit.

This approach to hermeneutics is understandable in a faith community where many people were poor and many would have been illiterate. A tradition based not around literacy or the need for formal institutional training but on the 'anointing' which the Spirit may offer to anyone, is a radical and inclusive alternative to those which elevate

²⁷⁴ William L. Oliverio Jr., *Theological Hermeneutics in the Classical Pentecostal Tradition: A Typological Account* (Leiden: Brill, 2012) 16.

²⁷⁵ Marius Nel, "Pentecostal Pacifist Homiletics," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 27, no. 2 (2018): 312.

intellectualism and exclude those disadvantaged by hierarchies. However, in distinguishing human from spiritual knowledge, we find evidence of another dualism which we must name and interrogate as it relates to the manner in which early pentecostals interpreted reality. This prioritising of 'spiritual knowledge' is in reality the prioritising of 'sacred' knowledge – knowledge that may be gained from the Holy Spirit to one's own spirit, through the scriptures but in relation to sacred or religious life. This is contrasted with 'worldly' knowledge as we see in the *Apostolic Faith*:

'The Lord knocked Paul down and he got up trembling and saying, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The Lord knocked all the worldly wisdom out of Paul. That is the reason He knocks so many people down here, to take the worldly wisdom out of them. Paul was a man full of the Wisdom and knowledge of this world, but when he got the 'baptism with the Holy Ghost, he was able to tell us about the true wisdom and true knowledge.'²⁷⁶

The baptism in the Spirit is understood to be the source of 'true knowledge' whereas knowledge gained any other way is secondary and redundant in comparison. This viewpoint looks for a direct impartation from the Spirit, rather than imagining that the Spirit of Truth may reveal truth through other sources. It is a narrow perspective on not only the nature of what truth is, but on where truth may be found and how it might be discovered. This further exacerbates the dualism in which the church is not only sacred, but also the container of 'true knowledge' while the world then, is both profane and ignorant. The church preoccupied with said 'true knowledge' is disengaged with the matters classed as 'worldly' such as the matters of politics, as Seymour has made clear. Inadvertently, this approach abandons 'the world' to being full of knowledge that is formed and shared by other spirits and other powers.

²⁷⁶ "Free from sin," *The Apostolic Faith* (April 1907) 3.

3.2.3 Communal Discernment

Scholars have argued that one of the particularities of pentecostal hermeneutics is the communal nature of the reading and interpretation of scripture.²⁷⁷ I will show that this is clear in the lives of the early pentecostals particularly through the use of testimony and what John Christopher Thomas calls 'pneumatic discernment.'²⁷⁸ However, I will argue that the pneumatic dualism I have outlined narrows this discernment, in that it is restricted to personal and religious matters. The fullness of the community is not brought into dialogue with the biblical text, which hampers theological hermeneutics and the potential for holistic, public theological formation.

For the pentecostal believers at Azusa Street, the reading and interpreting of scripture held a very particular place not for intellectual learning about God but for experiencing God.²⁷⁹ We have seen above that as the Spirit's utterance to the Church through the scriptures is core to pentecostal formation. However, this is not an individual process, but one that involves the community. This communal emphasis in pentecostal hermeneutics has been drawn out particularly by John Christopher Thomas in his proposal for a pentecostal hermeneutical paradigm based on Acts 15. He writes:

'1) It is the community that has gathered together in Acts 15. Such a gathering suggests that for the author of Acts it was absolutely essential for the community to be in on the interpretive decision reached. 2) It is the community that is able to give and receive testimony as well as assess the reports of God's activity in the lives of those who are part of the community. 3) Despite James' leading role in

²⁷⁷ Amos Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community: Theological Hermeneutics in Trinitarian Perspective* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002) 16-18; Thomas, "Women, Pentecostalism and the Bible" 88-9; Mark Cartledge, "Text-Community-Spirit" in *Spirit and Scripture: Exploring a Pneumatic Hermeneutic*, ed. Kevin L. Spawn and Archie T. Wright (London: T&T Clark, 2012) 133-5; Harris, "Black Pentecostal Hermeneutics?" 211.

²⁷⁸ John Christopher Thomas, "'What the Spirit is Saying to the Church' – the Testimony of a Pentecostal in New Testament Studies," in *Spirit and Scripture*, eds. Spawn and Wright, 117.

²⁷⁹ Andrew Davies, "What Does it Mean to Read the Bible as A Pentecostal?" *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 18, 2 (2009): 219.

the process, it is evident that the author of Acts regarded the decision as coming from the community under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.²⁸⁰

According to this framework, the community is core to the process of discernment. This is not simply important so that every person's voice is heard in the decision (1), but as a theological point, it means each person may contribute to the communal story of God's activity (2). The Spirit is not simply the one who energises this process or empowers it, the Spirit is the one who leads and directs the telling of this story (3). At Azusa Street we see that the Spirit moves, urges and anoints whoever she wills for the task of speaking forth the Word of God whether in a sermon or prophecy. In this, the Spirit can be understood to uplift the dignity of all people and assert the egalitarian love of God for all particularly the overlooked. A person's capacity to minister is not determined by theological training – in fact it can even be frowned upon – nor is ministry determined by experience or age.²⁸¹ It is the Spirit's anointing and calling that equips a person to preach, and the gift is open to all. As one testimony states in the *Apostolic Faith*:

'In Zion City, a little girl of about six years... was baptized with the Holy Ghost, and the Lord has had her preaching, and gave her a message to one of Dowie's elders that had fought this work. So God spoke through this little child unable to read. He could preach through the ass of Balaam and He can take a little child and preach through it.'²⁸²

The openness to unexpected preachers and prophets, is one element of pentecostalism's unique approach to scriptural engagement, another is the tradition of call and response.

Though one or a few people may be anointed to preach or speak, the call and response style

²⁸⁰ Thomas, "Women, Pentecostalism and the Bible" 88-89.

²⁸¹ 'God does not need a great theological preacher that can give nothing but theological chips and shavings to people. He can pick up a worm and thrash a mountain. He takes the weak things to confound the mighty. He is picking up pebble stones from the street and polishing them for His work. He is using even the children to preach His Gospel. A young sister, fourteen years old, was saved, sanctified and baptized with the Holy Ghost and went out, taking a band of workers with her, and led a revival in which one hundred and ninety souls were saved. Salaried ministers that are rejecting the Gospel will have to go out of business. He is sending out those who will go without money and without price.' "Back to Pentecost" *The Apostolic Faith* (October 1906) 3.

²⁸² "Fires being kindled by the Holy Ghost throughout the world," *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1907) 1.

of preaching, which is common in black pentecostalism particularly, illustrates the shared vocation of understanding the scriptures. The preacher's reliance on the congregation to respond, and the congregations' understanding that they must engage and consciously confirm what is being said,²⁸³ speaks to the expectation that the hearer not only the preacher or teacher, has a role in the hermeneutical process. The tradition of sharing testimonies is another prime example of pentecostal believers making sense of what God may be doing in their lives, with the help of the Bible and the congregation. We see this across the board in *The Apostolic Faith* as well as *Assemblies of God's Christian Evangel* and the *Church of God Evangel*. These publications are conduits for the sharing of stories about what God has been doing around the world. They illustrate what Mark Cartledge calls 'ordinary theology'.²⁸⁴ Reading the Bible together and reading one another's lives in the light of the Bible, is the manner of communal hermeneutic led by the Spirit, which characterises this movement in the early days of pentecostalism.

However, the Holy Spirit does not solely highlight the importance of community or empower individuals through the communal aspect of pentecostal hermeneutics, the Spirit also *forms* the community in holiness. Seymour warns that if believers neglect bible reading after being filled with the Holy Spirit:

'We will...begin to prophesy and think ourselves some great one, bigger than some other Christians. But by reading the Bible prayerfully, waiting before God, we become just little humble children, and we never feel that we have got more than the least of God's children.'²⁸⁵

The spiritual formation that takes place through prayerful bible reading under the power of the Spirit is distinct from that which takes places through prophecy for example. Where

²⁸³ Tomlin, *Preach It!*, 107-123.

²⁸⁴ Mark Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit: Rescripting Ordinary Pentecostal Theology* (Taylor & Francis Group, 2010) 11.

²⁸⁵ "Questions Answered" *The Apostolic Faith* (October 1907) 2.

prophesying may cause one to think themselves 'some great one', Seymour's hope is that believers are humbled as they read, pray and wait before God 'as little children'. Humility, for Seymour, should be formed in believers as they wait on God and the voice of the Spirit who may come through the words of any one of their spiritual siblings.

Yet, if the stories of the congregation have been filtered to remove what Seymour considers to be 'political' and thus 'contrary to the laws of God' then this communal discernment will offer only a shadow of what the Spirit might actually be saying.²⁸⁶ Antipas Harris has criticised 'white pentecostal hermeneutics' for taking this apolitical hermeneutical approach in contrast to black pentecostals who in his words 'have always taken into consideration the whole course of both human and religious experience'.²⁸⁷ However, since this apolitical hermeneutic is also evident here in the case of Seymour, we must either consider Seymour to be imbibing a 'white pentecostal hermeneutic' (which is possible) or accept that the dividing line may not always fall along the lines of race. Seymour is unwilling to draw his black experience into dialogue with his spirituality and theology, meaning that his 'distinctive preconceptions' as a black man are not brought to bear, to generate 'distinctive appropriations of the text'.²⁸⁸ Herein lies the limitation of this 'apolitical' hermeneutical approach. However, this should not be considered to be representative of all pentecostals. In the next section we will consider those early pentecostals whose theological reflection did include matters of politics and public life in an attempt to embody a prophetic hermeneutic.

²⁸⁶ Seymour, *The Doctrines and Disciplines*, 37.

²⁸⁷ Harris, "Black Pentecostal Hermeneutics," 197.

²⁸⁸ Davies, "What does it mean to read the bible as a Pentecostal?" 222.

3.2.4 The Possibility of a Prophetic Hermeneutic: Early Pentecostal Reflections

In our exploration of hermeneutics so far, we have noted that some of the early pentecostals at Azusa Street operated under pneumatic dualism rather than attaining pneumatic integralism. This is epitomised by William Seymour's forbidding of political discussion, and the general absence of any reference to public or political matters in testimonies of the Azusa Street revival or encounters with the Spirit in politically transformative ways.²⁸⁹ However, in this section I will highlight those classical pentecostals who encountered Azusa Street and also engaged in critical theological reflection on the matters of politics and public life.

Larry McQueen argues that the Acts 2 account of the Day of Pentecost is consistent with the prophecy recorded in Joel 2 in which the Spirit is promised in response to lament, as a sign and as the means of salvation and as a precursor to universal judgment.²⁹⁰ However, while McQueen presents early pentecostals as concerned primarily with the judgment which would 'begin with the household of God' I want to argue that early pentecostals were very concerned with the judgment of the 'world' and often turned a blind eye to its own complicity in sin.²⁹¹ For these pentecostals exemplified most poignantly by Charles Parham, the church-world dualism motivated a prophetic hermeneutic which promoted fierce denunciation of the 'world' and its structures. On the other hand, those who took an integrated prophetic approach coupled public theological reflection with a

²⁸⁹ 'Public' appears twice, one in reference to the church: 'The Lord was going to make this a public testimony of His power. I was not therefore, to have it in my little room, but among friends', "Baptised in New York" *The Apostolic Faith*, (December 1906), 3; Secondly, in the testimony "Arrested for Jesus sake" the man is arrested, sent to a hospital and sectioned for speaking in tongues in public, in *The Apostolic Faith* (December 1906) 3.

²⁹⁰ Larry McQueen, *Joel and the Spirit: the Cry of a Prophetic Hermeneutic* (Cleveland: CPT, 2009) 35, 37, 40-48.

²⁹¹ McQueen, *Joel and the Spirit*, 83-87.

willingness to critique the church's complicity in matters of injustice. We will look to Charles Mason founder of COGIC to explore this second model.

Early pentecostals did not simply use the scriptures as a key to understanding God's promises and intentions for themselves as the Spirit-baptised, but also to interpret what was taking place in the wider world. Frank Bartleman speaks of the nations being judged, naming Belgium, France, England and Germany as guilty before God because of their histories of colonial violence, their materialism and rising secularism.²⁹² Bartleman condemns England's 'hypocrisy' and 'overwhelming pride'; France's 'infidelity and devil worship' which have made her 'more guilty than Sodom and Gomorrah'; and Belgium and Germany's perceived secularism.²⁹³ Charles Parham speaks similarly of America, who he considers guilty before God because she has 'mingled the blood of thousands of human sacrifices upon the altar of her commercial and imperialistic expansion.'²⁹⁴ Parham denounces the global elite in the light of James 5, lamenting that 'today we not only have the wealth of the world gathered in the hands of the few, but piled up in combines and corporations and trusts' interpreting this as 'one of the proofs of the soon coming of the Lord.'²⁹⁵ These theological reflections signal something of an integral hermeneutic, in which the scriptures are viewed as an authority over the whole of life including the public and the political. While the public imagination as far as action may be hampered, there is a clear sense here, that the Spirit has something to say through the scriptures which offer a perspective on the political realities they are experiencing. In some cases, church leaders

²⁹² Frank Bartleman, "Present Day Conditions", in *Early Pentecostals on Nonviolence and Social: A Reader*, eds. Brian K. Pipkin and Jay Beaman (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016) 38-39.

²⁹³ Ibid, 38-39.

²⁹⁴ Pipkin and Beaman, *Early Pentecostals*, 2-5.

²⁹⁵ Pipkin and Beaman, *Early Pentecostals*, 3.

also instruct the church on how they should engage in political life. In 1908, the minutes for the Church of God general meeting read:

‘Church members should vote provided they can do so with a clear conscience (some sincere but misguided Christians always insist that children of God should be completely passive concerning political matters. The Church of God encourages participation in elections of government officials, small or great, for the preservation of freedom and democracy).’²⁹⁶

It goes on to forbid membership of lodges, promote obedience to laws ‘as long as laws do not conflict with Christ’s law’, and oppose the union of church and state.²⁹⁷ However, while Charles Parham and others in the early movement may clearly identify the failings of American society or indeed the ways Christians might engage politically in the light of biblical imperatives, their self-reflection undermines their witness. Charles Parham, as an example, is not attuned to his own tendencies to white supremacy in his theology and ministry, a reality which was also public and political.²⁹⁸ The church-world dualism which shapes these early pentecostal perspectives undermines critical reflection on theologies of power and the uses and abuses of power in the church. Early pentecostals are encouraged to see the ‘world’ as the threat, as the context in which sin and evil abound, and thus where the judgment of God falls. On the other hand, the church is considered the holy place in which the righteous dwell. Parham and many others would not, in this context, imagine that they themselves may have embodied ‘worldliness’ - in this case, white supremacy - because the political testimonies of African American believers were not heard in ways which would expose it. Silence and inattentiveness to the embodied experience of their spiritual siblings undermines communal discernment.

²⁹⁶ Church of God, “Minutes, 3rd General Assembly January 8-12, 1908” (Cleveland), 1.

²⁹⁷ Church of God, “Minutes, 3rd General Assembly January 8-12, 1908” (Cleveland), 1.

²⁹⁸ Charles Parham, “Chapter 8: Creation and Formation” in *A Voice Crying In The Wilderness: Kol Kare Bomidbar*, 1902 (Pentecostal Books: 2013) 87-92.

Charles Mason offers us a more integrated approach to public theological reflection, in which he is able to transcend the church-world dualism, as well as any dichotomy between personal and political or private and public. Raynard D. Smith argues that Mason embodies both a priestly function by calling for prayer and a prophetic function in which he calls for social resistance.²⁹⁹ Jonathan Chism describes Mason's social witness as involving 'grassroots revivalism' in which he affirmed the authority of the bible, and 'pragmatic accommodationism' through which he was willing to see and deal with the world as it actually was.³⁰⁰ However, we choose to describe Mason, he succeeded in overcoming the dualisms which would restrict his ministry to the church, or to the matters of 'religious' life. Mason's reading of the scriptures, motivated him to move beyond the limits of personal piety as he threads together the matters of individual morality with social ethics and political rebuke:

'Short-dress pride, low-necked pride, men proud over their success over others, lawyers proud over their arguments in sentencing someone for gain, judges proud over their power to send men into custody, men and women proud of their fine homes and automobiles...the rich man proud of his ascendancy over the poor, having gathered his gain by fraud and keeping back the hire from the poor. National pride bringing forth wars and polluting the land...all of these characters God will work with in storms, earthquakes, and great noise, and with flames of devouring fire.'³⁰¹

Mason demonstrates in this assertion, that sin (or pride as it is named here) is not limited to any sector of human life or community; it is not a private but a public matter and could be possible for both Christians and non-Christians. Here he touches not only on personal dress or greed but on egotism and love of power, on socio-economic inequality, exploitation of workers, war and ecological issues. We see in this framing of public sin, the remnants of an

²⁹⁹ Raynard D. Smith, *With Signs Following: The Life and Ministry of Charles Harrison Mason* (Christian Board of Publication, 2015) 97.

³⁰⁰ Chism, "The Saints Go Marching," 427-9.

³⁰¹ Jacobsen, *Reader in Pentecostal Theology*, 215.

integral African worldview in which all of life is caught up in the spiritual. However, in contrast to the African worldview in which deities or ancestors intervene in life to either bless or sabotage a person, for Mason, these matters are the result of human failure. Mason does not blame spirits or the devil – he calls individual people to account for their own pride, but he also calls to nations to answer for their actions which have caused destruction and oppression. Mason is also able to engage in self-reflection regarding the church and its own sin, particularly in neglecting the matters of justice. This approach was also taken by Robert Clarence Lawson, a later contemporary of Mason, who was known for political engagement in Harlem in New York. A pentecostal pastor himself, he critiqued pentecostals who ‘sing and shout and pray and preach loud’ when ‘what this poor world is longing for is the real love of God, lived.’³⁰² If pentecostal epistemology and hermeneutics have been shown to resist pneumatic integralism then Mason and Lawson exemplify the alternative. Mason’s recognised political experience as crucial to hermeneutics before his pentecostal encounter at Azusa Street, as Bishop Ithiel Clemons explains:

‘While seeking to preserve a black religious and cultural charisma, (COGIC) critically assessed the black church, white churches and the majority culture that blacks sought to emulate. Based on black slave tradition and the reading of Scripture from the perspective of poor black people, the Church of God in Christ offered a radical alternative to the majority culture.’³⁰³

In this we find the continuation of the liberating hermeneutics of the AME founder Richard Allen, who recognised the scriptures as the key to the empowerment of black people.

Mason is able to retain this black liberating hermeneutic after his Spirit baptism, it is not considered to conflict with the life of the Spirit in him or the church he leads. The tradition

³⁰² Lloyd Barba, “Jesus Would Be Jim Crowed: Bishop Robert Lawson on Race and Religion in the Harlem Renaissance,” *Journal of Race, Ethnicity and Religion* 6, no. 3 (August 2015); Jacobsen, *Reader in Pentecostal Theology*, 202.

³⁰³ Bishop Ithiel Clemmons, *Bishop C. H. Mason and the Roots of the Church of God in Christ* (Largo: Christian Living Books, 1996) 22.

of reading the scripture from the perspective of the poor, demonstrates the radical potential of the Holiness movement, which was inherited by pentecostalism, even if unconsciously. It is this hermeneutic tradition within black pentecostalism that Antipas Harris wants to draw our attention to. In what is a black liberation tradition within pentecostalism, God is understood 'as One who cares about spiritual and everyday life', making black experience 'an essential theological source.'³⁰⁴ This tradition is the host for pneumatic integralism, in which both religious and wider human experience are drawn into dialogue with the text and recognised as sites for the Spirit's presence and action. It demands attentiveness to the matters of power and powerlessness in political life, and the capacity to read the Bible with these dynamics in mind.

3.3 Conclusion: An Anti-Pneumatic Pentecostalism?

We began this chapter with the argument that Azusa Street's classical American pentecostalism was characterised by a tension between pneumatic dualism and pneumatic integralism. We saw that this schism was inherited from the Methodists, for whom holiness was understood in both dualistic and integral ways. In the case of its epistemology of experience, I argued that the pentecostal imagination was generally limited to the religious and individualised elements of Holy Spirit encounter. We saw that Holy Spirit-baptism was focussed on the religious bodily encounter and healing and miraculous provision were individualised and privatised. This dualism was then made clear in the case of hermeneutics, in which the Spirit reveals true knowledge through the scriptures but there can be suspicion of what is deemed 'human' knowledge. We then moved on to acknowledge the egalitarian element of pentecostal hermeneutics' communal emphasis, while recognising that the

³⁰⁴ Harris, "Black Pentecostal Hermeneutics," 197-8.

fullness of human experience was not embraced in general. However, we challenged the supposition that early pentecostals were uninterested in political matters, by highlighting public theological reflection witnessed in the prophetic-judge and prophetic-priest approaches.

In the final section of this chapter I want to draw this argument together by drawing out the key implication of this discussion of ‘pneumatic dualism’ and ‘pneumatic integralism’ as seen in the matters of epistemology and hermeneutics specifically. Though we have dealt with the matter of race extensively in this chapter, I want to reiterate again, that race in my thinking here is simply a case from which we might draw particular conclusions about pentecostal spirituality in relation to human embodiment and the problems of power and politics. The integralism of the Spirit is recognised from what we have seen, in the various challenges to the status quo whether in the church or wider society. The Spirit moves freely, empowering women, raising up of the poor and recognising black humanity.

Where people resist this work of the Spirit, we could rightly consider the Spirit to be grieved. When pentecostal believers themselves resist this Pentecost, they are in fact acting within an ‘anti-pneumatic’ posture. While pentecostals have faced the challenges of anti-pentecostalism from those external to the movement, to be an anti-pneumatic pentecostal, is to cling to privilege and power and resist the Spirit who seeks to unravel the status quo with its various oppressions.³⁰⁵ We see this resistance to the Holy Spirit in the prevalence of white supremacy which indicated a particular kind unholiness shared across the church-world divide. The resistance to William Seymour’s interracial vision, discrimination against black ministers and the determination of white leaders to set up denominations separate from

³⁰⁵ Horace S. Ward, “The Anti-Pentecostal Argument,” in *Aspects*, ed, Synan, 101.

black leadership, are clear indications of this.³⁰⁶ We might easily draw a similar connection to the subsequent limitation of women in the movement, whose leadership opportunities are stifled by the desire to conform to patriarchal norms in church governance. It would not be obscene to suggest that these tendencies to cling to control and human (dis)order sabotaged the early movement. Where the Spirit sought to rightly order the Spirit-baptised community by enabling a new Pentecost, she was resisted. The Spirit can be seen as one who reinforced the dignity of all bodies and sought to empower all those who were oppressed, for the purpose of their liberation. However, this political revival was not welcomed by all.

³⁰⁶ Iain MacRobert, *The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA*, 63-64; Jacobsen, *Reader in Pentecostal Theology*, 201.

4 CLASSICAL PENTECOSTALISM IN BRITAIN

In looking back at the history of classical pentecostalism, we have seen that understanding the social identity and political interests of believers, gives important context to the analysis of spirituality and theological perspectives. By drawing early pentecostal spirituality and theology into dialogue with the contemporary realities of black trauma post-slavery as an example, we have seen that Azusa Street's pentecostals were not formed solely by encounter with the Spirit, but by encounters with narratives, government policy and political violence. Those who chose not to engage in critical analysis of these realities, such as Seymour who banned 'political discussion', were not able to escape the impact of politics; they simply allowed these influences to go unnamed. Politics was alive and well at Azusa Street in the experiences of the poor and working class struggling for work and a better life, the black people living under the threat of racial violence, and the women disempowered in all senses in wider society. Eradicating 'political discussion' simply allowed these inequalities to go unnamed and unchecked in the world, and sometimes in the church.

It is for this reason that we discuss the development of classical British pentecostalism interweaved with critical analysis of socio-economic, cultural and political context. We will begin by considering two main aspects of the British pentecostal story which are relevant to this thesis. In the first instance we will trace the story of white British pentecostalism, with its various influences, notably the Welsh Revival and Keswick Convention. In the second, we will look at the first wave of pentecostalism which arrived from abroad with African Caribbeans from 1948 onwards. I will argue that in each of these cases, we can again see conflicting ideas about what revival or being Spirit-baptised might mean in public terms. In other words, the conflict between pneumatic dualism and

pneumatic integralism persists. In the second section of this chapter we will examine the state of classical pentecostalism in contemporary Britain by beginning with a focussed consideration of life in Britain today as the context in which contemporary classical pentecostals find themselves. Special attention will be given to the socio-economic and political status quo which I suggest is shaped by neoliberal capitalism and class inequality, racism and gender discrimination. We will see that classical pentecostalism in Britain imbibes many of these norms even though there are signs of hope in regard to certain matters of equality and justice.

4.1 Historic Context

The history of British pentecostalism involves many contributing strands which we will explore in the first section of this chapter. While we have focussed in the previous chapters on Azusa Street, discussing British pentecostalism involves highlighting various other trajectories that have contributed to its development. In this section I will address the two main trajectories of classical British pentecostalism. Primarily, I will argue that the white British pentecostal story can be traced through the experience of revivals among working class and poor white populations with considerable influence from Azusa Street. Secondly, I will argue that black pentecostalism constitutes the other side of the story, which can be told by tracing Azusa Street's influence through Jamaica to Britain from the Windrush era onwards.

4.1.1 Reviving the Poor: White British Pentecostalism

4.1.1.1 British Revivalism

The impact of Azusa Street follows a series of earlier events and the ministry of various individuals in Britain and Ireland that must be noted. One of these lesser-known figures is Edward Irving, a Scottish Presbyterian minister in London. In 1831, he noted that two of his

parishioners had received the gift of tongues and prophecy and promoted to move to welcome these spiritual gifts despite the cessationist stance of the Church of Scotland.³⁰⁷ He was removed from his church but many congregants continued to gather to hear him preach. Irving, known for starting the 'Catholic Apostolic movement' subsequently preached this pentecostal message around Britain, most notably among the Brethren in Ireland who experienced their own revival in 1831.³⁰⁸ We might also consider the seeds sown by the Keswick convention, an inter-denominational gathering in England which drew many revivalist and pentecostal leaders from the late 19th century onwards.³⁰⁹ Keswick's promotion of 'Higher Life' teaching took a distinct approach from that of the Wesleys, to the matter of Christian perfection, but nevertheless reinforced the passion for deeper faith and expression of a distinct Christian lifestyle.³¹⁰

The most notable precursor to Azusa Street for British pentecostalism is the Welsh revival of 1904. As Evan Roberts preached the baptism in the Holy Spirit, people experienced God's power as they were conviction of sin and repented, were instantly converted and sang rejoicing in worship.³¹¹ People travelled from around the world to see what was happening. The events which unfolded in Wales acted as a catalyst for those people who went on to connect with Azusa Street and were then credited with cultivating pentecostalism in Britain. Thomas B. Barrett was a Methodist minister who himself has been converted at a revival as a young man. His passion for revival in Oslo grew as he exchanged letters with Evans Roberts, one of the leaders at the revival in Wales.³¹² Barratt exchanged

³⁰⁷ Larry Christenson, "Pentecostalism's Forgotten Forerunner," in *Aspects*, ed, Synan, 19.

³⁰⁸ Keith Malcolmson, *Pentecostal Pioneers Remembered: British and Irish Pioneers of Pentecost* (Xulon Press, 2008) 29.

³⁰⁹ Malcolmson, *Pentecostal Pioneers*, 72, 74.

³¹⁰ William Menzies, "Non-Wesleyan Origins of the Pentecostal Movement," in *Aspects*, ed, Synan, 86.

³¹¹ Malcolmson, *Pentecostal Pioneers*, 81-82.

³¹² Malcolmson, *Pentecostal Pioneers*, 107.

similar letters with the leaders of the Azusa Street Mission having read about the revival in the *Apostolic Faith* asking them for advice.³¹³ Soon after, he and his colleague received the baptism in the Spirit in a similar manner to what had been witnessed at Azusa Street.³¹⁴ Alexander Boddy, the Anglican priest of All Saints Parish in Sunderland travelled to several places in search of revival. He witnessed first-hand the Welsh revival in 1904 and subsequently travelled to the revival in Norway which was taking place under Thomas B. Barrett in 1907.³¹⁵ It was at Boddy's invitation that Barrett came to Sunderland in September 1907, which is noted by some as the start of the pentecostal movement in Britain.³¹⁶ Boddy and his family are recorded to have received their pentecost in Sunderland in 1907 and again in 1908, but despite being eager to see Azusa Street as the site of this great revival, Boddy did not get to visit Los Angeles until 1912.³¹⁷ While Azusa St and American pentecostalism have been influential in the story of British pentecostalism, British pentecostalism is by no means simply a British version of an American phenomenon, but a river formed by many different tributaries.

4.1.1.2 Revival and the matters of Public life

At its roots, British revivalism and pentecostalism in particular, finds itself historically among the working class and the poor both in terms of the leaders (for the most-part) and the communities who experience it. Thomas Ball Barratt, though a Methodist preacher, worked alongside his father who was a manager at local coal mines, as his grandfather had also

³¹³ David Bundy, "Spiritual Advice to a Seeker: T.B. Barratt from Azusa Street, 1906" *Pneuma* 14, no.1 (1992): 160.

³¹⁴ Malcolmson, *Pentecostal Pioneers*, 108.

³¹⁵ Malcolmson, *Pentecostal Pioneers*, 120-1.

³¹⁶ Malcolmson, *Pentecostal Pioneers*, 109.

³¹⁷ "Children receive Pentecost," *The Apostolic Faith* (Los Angeles: 1908), 1; Alexander A. Boddy "At Los Angeles, California," *Confidence* (Sunderland, Oct 1912), 232-234; Alexander A. Boddy, "A meeting at the Azusa Street Mission, Los Angeles," *Confidence* (Sunderland, Nov 1912), 244-245; Edith Blumhofer, "Alexander Boddy and the Rise of Pentecostalism in Great Britain," *Pneuma* 8 no.1, (1986): 32.

been.³¹⁸ Alexander Boddy, though from a middle class background who initially had ambitions to be a solicitor, was ordained and served as priest in Sunderland which was the heart of Industrial Britain and working class life.³¹⁹ Though as an Anglican, Boddy's relationship with the non-conformist leaders eventually involved significant tensions particularly in relation to war and pacifism, his role in the story of British pentecostalism is undeniable.³²⁰ Evan Roberts, who led the Welsh revival, left school aged 11 to work in the coal mines with his father as a 'door boy'.³²¹ Yet despite the socio-economic conditions of the congregations and many of their leaders, stories of revivals rarely include any notion that encounter with the Spirit directly or indirectly impacts upon non-religious experience. For example, the stories of the Welsh revival of 1905 are consistent with the elements of the Azusa Street revival which emphasize the personal and religious encounter with the Holy Spirit, emphasizing personal repentance, baptism in the Holy Spirit, ecstatic worship and emotionalism, as well as welcoming leadership by women and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.³²² However no attention is given to what the encounter with the Spirit might mean for the wider socio-economic conditions of these congregations, and their communities.³²³ For this reason, some observers of the Welsh revival of 1905 consider it to have actually *reversed* the political appetite and activism of Wales' Christians. One

³¹⁸ Terje Hegertun, "Thomas Ball Barratt and 'the Spirit of Unity'", *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 35, no. 1 (2015): 35.

³¹⁹ Neil Hudson, "The Development of British Pentecostalism," in *European Pentecostalism*, ed. William K. Kay and Anne E. Dyer (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 43.

³²⁰ Kyu-Hyung Cho, "The move to independence from Anglican leadership: an examination of the relationship between Alexander Alfred Boddy and the early leaders of the British Pentecostal denominations (1907-1930)" (PhD Diss.: University of Birmingham: 2009), 130, 140-77.

³²¹ Malcolmson, *Pentecostal Pioneers*, 78.

³²² Kyu-Hyung Cho, "The Importance of the Welsh Religious Revival in the formation of British Pentecostalism," *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association*, 30:1, (2010), 24-27; Malcolmson, *Pentecostal Pioneers*, 81; Morgan, G. Campbell and William T. Stead, *The Welsh Revival and the Story of the Welsh Revival* (Lawton: Trumpet Press, 2015), 43.

³²³ Cho, "The Importance of the Welsh Religious Revival," 27.

contemporary journalist wrote that since the end of the earlier revival in the mid 18th-19th century, Christians 'had been turned from the otherworldliness of the revival days' and instead engaged with the matters of politics, education and civil society organisation.³²⁴ Yet with the coming of the revival of 1905, he notes that Christians were no longer campaigning against grant cuts for church schools and literary meetings were 'falling flat'.³²⁵ Overall he suggests that Wales' Christians returned to 'old narrow and Puritan conception of the religious life.'³²⁶ This return to the narrowness of the religious life suggests that the Welsh revival helped to reinforce the pneumatic dualism we highlighted in the previous chapter. Rather than having a public, political or economic expectation of the Spirit's work, the revival in fact turns attention away from public life, inward.

Despite this common dualistic emphasis, William T. Stead indicates that a pneumatic integralism may have been present even if it was not the most prevalent perspective. In Stead's account of the 1905 Welsh Revival, he seeks to draw correlations between revival history and wider political shifts. Stead suggests for example, that the 19th century revivals in America were the precursor to the 'era of democracy'.³²⁷ He describes the Welsh context as a place in which the wealthy chase pleasure and greed while neglecting their faith, the poor are exploited and the government wastes resources and is indifferent to blood-shed.³²⁸ This explains why the revival has occurred in Wales, as in his estimation, revivals always happen when the nation has been 'given over to the Evil One before the coming of the Son of Man.'³²⁹ While Stead is not specific about *how* revival and wider political shifts are

³²⁴ "The Welsh Revival," *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, 99 (1905): 40.

³²⁵ "The Welsh Revival," 40.

³²⁶ "The Welsh Revival," 41.

³²⁷ Stead, *The Welsh Revival*, 24.

³²⁸ Stead, *The Welsh Revival*, 17.

³²⁹ Stead, *The Welsh Revival*, 17.

related (i.e. due to the direct intervention of the Spirit in political life, or through Spirit-baptised people impacting society) his willingness to view political life through the lenses of the Spirit's work and power stands out among his contemporaries. While for many the social impact of revival is focused on personal morality (seen in such changes as reductions in crime and drunkenness or the emptying of pubs and theatres) Stead's imagination is political and structural.³³⁰ Stead is not able to predict what the 1905 revival in Wales might usher in but he does indicate that revivals have historical significance, even for those beyond the church. By suggesting that the Spirit's presence revives the church *and* the public landscape, he hints at pneumatic integralism. This public revival, for Stead, is the work of the Holy Spirit in the world and is not dependent on the Church to be the initiator. On the one hand, the implication of Stead's conclusion, is that public and political encounters with the Spirit are as spontaneous (from our perspective) as any religious, church-centred revival. This opens up possibilities and anticipation of what might be possible. On the other hand, when political transformation is tied to revival in the way Stead suggests, the place for human agency, political organising and activism may easily be considered useless or unnecessary. The place of divine-human agency in pentecostal perspectives on social change is a crucial point we shall discuss in chapter 6.

4.1.1.3 Classical White Pentecostalism in Britain

Various revivals cultivated the ground in which British pentecostalism was formed, particularly among the working classes. When we analyse the Welsh revival which was hugely influential in the imagination of early pentecostals, we can see the continuation of an overall dualistic perspective on the Spirit's work, with some potential for an integral

³³⁰ Malcolmson, *Pentecostal Pioneers*, 82.

viewpoint. On the whole, the revival does not generate the kind of holistic changes that would have served not only the members of the churches but wider population of Wales and the UK. These overwhelmingly spiritual and individualised encounters with the Holy Spirit, do not reorient or transform the wider social and political life in any way that might be considered consistent with the integral life-giving work of the Spirit. While we have focussed on the matter of revival history in this section, it is also clear from the work of Leigh Goodwin that the Pentecostal Mission Union which started in 1909 was also core to the expression of British pentecostalism in the earliest days.³³¹ It is within the context of a mission-focussed spiritual heritage that classical pentecostalism develops in Britain. The Apostolic Faith Church, Elim and Assemblies of God GB were the earliest pentecostal denominations to be formed in 1908, 1915 and 1924 respectively.³³² The influence of Azusa Street's pentecostalism on these early British denominations was inevitable even if (as William Kay explains) there was some reticence about American domination and therefore a lack of formal institutional relationships with American pentecostals.³³³

When it comes to the matters of pneumatology and public theology and action, we can see that AOG, whose churches we will examine in the subsequent chapters, have historically exhibited the pneumatic dualism which has characterised of British revival history and the majority of those at Azusa Street. In the first edition of *Redemption Tidings*, the newsletter published by the newly formed Assemblies of God in 1924, they reiterate

³³¹ Leigh Goodwin, "The Pentecostal Missionary Union (PMU): a case study exploring the missiological roots of early British Pentecostalism (1909-1925)." (PhD Diss., University of Chester, 2013) 111-9.

³³² Neil Hudson, "The Development of British Pentecostalism," in *European Pentecostalism*, eds, Kay and Dyer, 44, 47-9, 49-51; William Kay, "Marks of British and Charismatic Pentecostalism," in *Pentecostals and Charismatics in Britain: An Anthology*, ed, Aldred, 54-5.

³³³ William Kay explains that AOG was inspired by AG's organisational pattern, and made use of their literature, but also describes English concerns about 'American domination' of British churches in William Kay, "A History of British Assemblies of God," (PhD Diss., University of Nottingham, 1989) 76, 81, 160, 248. See also Cho, "The move to independence from Anglican leadership," 17-18, 46; Seymour, "For such a time as this," 184; Edith Blumhofer, "Alexander Boddy and the Rise of Pentecostalism in Great Britain," 31.

their commitment to the four square Gospel of Jesus as ‘saviour from sin, baptiser in the Holy Spirit, great physician in sickness and soon-coming Lord’.³³⁴ Their message is stated as ‘redemption by the blood of Christ - full and complete, for Spirit, Soul and Body’ and this emphasis is clear in the accounts of bodily healing, individual conversion and baptism in the Spirit.³³⁵ However, their principal focus is not on what Spirit-baptism means for the body (and bodies) in social and political terms, but rather on individualised healing as a continuation of the salvation history captured in the bible, as seen in the words of Smith Wigglesworth, a leader of the new AOG:

‘I said to these people, “I believe your son will rise today.” They only laughed. People do not expect to see signs and wonders today as the disciples saw them of old. Has God changed? Or has our faith waned so that we are not expecting the greater works that Jesus promised? We must not harp on any minor key. Our message must rise to concert pitch and there must be nothing left out that is in the Book.’³³⁶

In regards to public or political concerns, Assemblies of God has typically remained disengaged from political action, even if they have spoken up against the political establishment particularly in relation to pacifist convictions.³³⁷ Despite the admonition of many pentecostal leaders (particularly the non-Anglicans as Cho has argued)³³⁸ many members did go to war either voluntarily or due to conscription, suggesting the rank-a-file made decisions about their own engagement with public life beyond the theological rationale offered by their leadership.³³⁹

³³⁴ “Editorial,” *Redemption Tidings* (Stockport: Assemblies of God in Britain and Ireland, 1924) 8.

³³⁵ “Editorial,” *Redemption Tidings*, 8, 10.

³³⁶ Smith Wigglesworth, “Our risen Christ,” in *Redemption Tidings*, 2.

³³⁷ Cho, “The move to independence from Anglican leadership,” 144’ Nel, “Pacifist Homiletics,” 312; Leigh Goodwin, “The Response of Early British Pentecostals to National Conscription during the Great War (1914-1918),” *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association*, 34:1, (2014): 91.

³³⁸ Cho, “The move to independence from Anglican leadership,” 132-144.

³³⁹ William Kay, “British Assemblies of God: The War Years,” 54.

4.1.1.4 Summary

In summary, we can see that in addition to the influence of Azusa street, British pentecostalism developed in the midst of various revivalist strands. For the most part, white British pentecostalism is consistent with the pneumatic dualism strand in which Spirit-baptism and revival are focussed on the individual and religious experience. While some theological reflection occurs in relation to the matters of public life, this is not a common or core part of white pentecostal heritage.

4.1.2 African Caribbean Pentecostals: The First Wave of Black Christianity in Britain

The story of African Caribbean pentecostalism in Britain is interweaved with the history of British colonialism and the migration of those from the Commonwealth to the 'motherland'. We will focus on Jamaican pentecostalism specifically in this chapter and will begin by looking back to Jamaica's pentecostal history before following the trajectory to Britain.

4.1.2.1 Jamaican Pentecostalism

Overall, pentecostalism in Jamaica followed the pattern of pneumatic dualism due to its links with the revivals and missionaries of America and Britain. The Moravians, Methodists and Baptists arrived in Jamaica as missionaries preaching a Christian message which focussed on individual conversion and strict moral codes.³⁴⁰ This particular theological emphasis - though common in various contexts - took on a colonial identity in this context, where it served to stabilise the enslavement of Africans and undermine collective identity and rebellion. Jamaica experienced its own Great Revival in 1860-61 which was influenced by the revivals taking place in Britain and the USA.³⁴¹ Jamaica's revival was Christian in its

³⁴⁰ Diane Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis: Religion and the Politics of Moral Orders* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997) 36.

³⁴¹ Nathaniel Samuel Murrell, *Afro-Caribbean Religions: An Introduction to Their Historical, Cultural, and Sacred Traditions* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009) 13.

essence but has been linked to the creation of 'creole religions' in which the traditional African spiritualities and religions of the Africans in Jamaica, were merged with Christian beliefs and revivalist expressions.³⁴² The revival began among the Moravian churches established by missionaries, with very similar stories to what was seen in Wales and would be seen later at Azusa Street:

'Multitudes were falling on every side, uttering the most piercing screams. A gentleman present said he counted thirteen prostrated in one corner of the church at one time. The sword of the Spirit has penetrated a multitude of souls, conceived them of sin and forced them to cry for mercy.'³⁴³

Missionary Gavin Carlisle describes the congregation as growing in 'intelligence' after the revival and lack of quarrelling in the community. The imposition of Christian marriage on Jamaicans is spoken of as the purification of society and the eradication of the 'old filthy manner of living' in which common-law relationships were the norm.³⁴⁴ These signs of European respectability were evidence to Carlisle and others of the powerful work of the Spirit of God in the lives of Jamaicans and Jamaican society. However, the stories of the revival follow the pattern of pneumatic dualism that we have seen in the Welsh revival and at Azusa Street. While Carlisle rejoices at the 'new era' in the congregation, the socio-economic life of Jamaica will only increase in instability and poverty, in the run up to the Morant Bay Rebellion in 1865.³⁴⁵ He admits that Jamaicans are exploited by the planters and the magistrates in a system post-emancipation that maintained the poverty of Africans after slavery was abolished.³⁴⁶ However, revival does not, in his imagination, involve the addressing of these realities.

³⁴² Murrell, *Afro-Caribbean Religions*, 13.

³⁴³ Gavin Carlisle, *Thirty-eight Years' Mission Life in Jamaica: A Brief Sketch of the Rev. Warrant Carlisle, Missionary at Brownsville* (United Kingdom: J. Nisbet & Company, 1884) 116.

³⁴⁴ Carlisle, *Thirty-eight Years' Mission Life in Jamaica*, 125, 126.

³⁴⁵ Carlisle, *Thirty-eight Years' Mission Life in Jamaica*, 125.

³⁴⁶ Carlisle, *Thirty-eight Years' Mission Life in Jamaica*, 129-30.

The inadequacy of Jamaican pentecostalism to address the full reality of believers' lives is seen more starkly when we compare the lack of pentecostal political engagement to radical action of Jamaican Baptists. Jamaica's Great Revival, as we have seen above, was restricted to ecstatic religious experience and personal piety for those within the church. As a result of these tendencies, Diane Austin Broos labels pentecostals as being historically 'socially conservative, quietist and post-Nationalist' in contrast to their Baptist counterparts.³⁴⁷ The Morant Bay Rebellion, an act of political and spiritual provocation by native Jamaican Baptists Paul Bogle and George William Gordon, exemplifies this contrast. Gordon, who had personal experience of the Great revival, was also deeply motivated by his encounters with the poverty and exploitation in Jamaica at the time.³⁴⁸ This rebellion, incited after an unjust ruling regarding land,³⁴⁹ could be considered a kind of revival in itself, if revival is understood in holistic terms, as an act of the Spirit within the person and among the people, which disrupts and overturns the status quo in order to make God and God's ways known. It is through Bogle and Gordon's openness to integrate the socio-political and religious that their actions are empowered which made an unforgettable mark on Jamaica's history.³⁵⁰ Gordon was influenced by the Great revival enough for his own empowerment, but not so much that he would tip into a dualism which would focus solely on the religious and individual. Overall, pentecostals resided firmly within a dualistic perspective on the work of the Holy Spirit, in which rebellion or political action was deemed irrelevant and even contradictory to her ministry.

³⁴⁷ Diane Austin-Broos, "Jamaican Pentecostalism: its growth and significance," *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 58:3, (2020), 286.

³⁴⁸ Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 60; Beckford, *Dread and Pentecostal*, 102-3.

³⁴⁹ Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 60.

³⁵⁰ Horace O. Russell, "The Reactions of the Baptist Missionary Society and the Jamaican Baptist Union to the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865." *Journal of Church and State* 35, no. 3 (1993): 593, 601; Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 60-61.

4.1.2.1.1 Church of God: NTCG and COGOP

In 1918 missionaries arrived in Jamaica from the COG in Cleveland Tennessee, which would be the beginnings of the NTCG and the COGOP in the Caribbean. The COG was formed under the leadership of A.J. Tomlinson as a mainly white denomination in the US, with significant evangelistic and missionary ambitions.³⁵¹ In the USA, the COG held classical pentecostal spirituality and doctrine together with practical support for those in need, though in Jamaica, their focus was purely evangelistic. For example, despite their pacifist stance, the COG had a 'servicemen's department' which sought to 'extend care and support' to American military servicemen around the world.³⁵² This was not simply motivated by compassion and care, but also a hope that those 'uprooted sons' would engage in global evangelism and mission.³⁵³ In Jamaica, the COG focussed purely on evangelism and conversion, as indicated in the Minutes of the Twentieth Annual Assembly in 1925.³⁵⁴ The Jamaican natives are described repeatedly as 'hungry for the gospel' but also as 'poor' without there being any mention of addressing their poverty:

"When I went to those islands I could not find a Church of God, but the people were hungry for the gospel and there was a little band of people who were sanctified and filled with the Holy Ghost. They were very nice to us and took us into their homes... I will say to the next Overseer that you will find a big-hearted people over there who are loyal and honest and are real hungry for the gospel. They are poor but will do for you all that they possibly can."³⁵⁵

³⁵¹ For a discussion of race relations in the Church of God see Paul H. Thompson, "'On Account of Conditions That Seem Unalterable': A Proposal about Race Relations in the Church of God (Cleveland, TN) 1909-1929," *Pneuma* 25, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 240-64; For discussion of the Church of God's presence in the wider Caribbean see James T. Duke, Barry L. Johnson, and James B. Duke, "The World Context of Religious Change in the Caribbean," *Social and Economic Studies* 44, no. 2/3 (1995): 163, 164.

³⁵² Conn, *Like a Mighty Army*, 325.

³⁵³ Conn, *Like a Mighty Army*, 325.

³⁵⁴ Reports from Jamaica in the *Church of God Evangel* also tend to focus purely on the number of conversions, healings and baptisms. See "Brother Simmons encouraged over the work in Jamaica," in *Church of God Evangel*, 16, no.26 (June 27, 1925): 1; "Jamaica island reports victory," in *Church of God Evangel*, 17, no.27 (June 10, 1926): 4; "Close teaching makes believers," *Church of God Evangel*, 18, no.27 (July 7, 1927): 2.

³⁵⁵ E.E. Simmons, "Jamaica," in *Minutes of the 20th Annual Assembly of the Churches of God* (Cleveland: Church of God Publishing House, 1925) 29-30.

Funding from the COG in Cleveland is requested for the support of missionaries and practicalities of ministry such as rent payments, but it is not immediately clear that the material needs of Jamaicans were recognised as important.³⁵⁶ Despite these discrepancies, the COG experienced great success through both the COGOP which was decidedly working-class and the NTCG which spanned the lower and lower-middle working class.³⁵⁷ However, underneath this apparent success was the suspicion among Jamaicans that America's pentecostalism was racially biased and that the missionaries brought those biases to Jamaica through white leadership over black congregations and the ostracising of poor black Jamaicans who were further from white notions of civility than their wealthier counterparts.³⁵⁸ Indigenous leadership became crucial to the growth of COGOP and NTCG in Jamaica.

4.1.2.1.2 COGIC

In the early 1920s, Charles H. Mason of Church of God in Christ, launched a missionary outreach in Jamaica which was very successful, attracting many adherents.³⁵⁹ We have seen that COGIC in the USA, under the leadership of Charles Mason, embodied a more integral theology in regard to the Holy Spirit's presence and a concern for black liberation in particular. This continues in COGIC's concern for black community development in its mission work as Calvin White explains.³⁶⁰ However, White also argues that COGIC was itself evolving in ways which caused their American missionaries to display paternalism to the Africans and Caribbeans abroad and their culture, as a result:

³⁵⁶ F. J. Lee, "Missionary Fund," in *Church of God Evangel*, 16, no.10 (March 7, 1925): 1; F. J. Lee, "Brother Simmons encouraged over the work in Jamaica," in *Church of God Evangel*, 16, no.26 (June 27, 1925): 1.

³⁵⁷ Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 115.

³⁵⁸ Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 115-6.

³⁵⁹ Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 98,101.

³⁶⁰ White, *The Rise to Respectability*, 81.

'COGIC missionaries dispensed their own brand of respectability throughout their foreign missions, which duplicated and imposed middle-class values in their missions just as white northern missionaries had among blacks in the South after the Civil War.'³⁶¹

The matter of respectability is crucial when analysing the religion of a people in diaspora as survival often depends on one's ability to integrate and attain 'civility' by the standards of the society one is now a part of.³⁶² For members of the African diaspora for example, this impacted upon the nature and expression of their pentecostalism. While Mason forged a liberation theology and upheld the African heritage which offered the first generation of COGIC members resources for survival, a generation later, those interests had shifted. However, scholars have demonstrated both women and men within COGIC have been involved in political action in the US, and particularly during the Civil Rights era and beyond.³⁶³ Despite these claims of (white) respectability politics in the Caribbean, some leaders within COGIC in the US managed to merge a black liberation agenda with their pentecostal spirituality in order to create political change. We will see that individual leaders within COGIC in Britain also resisted the tendency towards an apolitical stance, which may have affected the denomination at large.

4.1.2.2 Jamaican Pentecostals in Britain

Having contributed and fought in two world wars alongside troops from Britain, citizens from the British commonwealth were then called upon to rebuild post-war Britain.

Motivated by the devastated economies in their home countries and the potential for work in Britain, many people chose to emigrate from the Caribbean. The most famous moment of

³⁶¹ White, *The Rise to Respectability*, 81.

³⁶² Butler, *Women in the Church of God in Christ*, 21-22.

³⁶³ David Daniels III, "Doing All the Good We Can": the Political Witness of African American Holiness and Pentecostal Churches in the Post-Civil Rights Era," in *New Day Begun: African American Churches and Civic Culture in Post-Civil Rights America*, ed. R. Drew Smith (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003) 164-182; Chism, "The Saints go Marching," 426-441; Butler, *Women in the Church of God in Christ*, 99-111.

this period was the arrival of the Empire Windrush at Tilbury Docks from the Caribbean in 1948 which brought people mainly from Jamaica but also other islands in the Caribbean.³⁶⁴ However, it is clear that while many in government and industry hoped to gain from the advantages of having an influx of new British subjects from the Caribbean to work and rebuild the economy and infrastructure, both the government and the wider population were unprepared for the bringing together of these worlds.³⁶⁵ The new arrivals were met with hostility by the general population and also by those in authority. Racial abuse and assault were commonplace, as the new arrivals faced discrimination in housing, employment and education, and even violence at the hands of police. The situation was not much improved in churches. The racism of many white Christian leaders and their congregations was palpable, with many across denominations and traditions refusing to welcome their spiritual siblings from the Caribbean.³⁶⁶ Many Caribbeans who arrived in the UK as Anglicans, Methodists and Baptists for example, faced great disappointment and pain at these rejections.³⁶⁷ As a result, Caribbean Christians from these traditions joined or indeed founded new black-led pentecostal churches where they received welcome, social support and a sense of cultural synergy.³⁶⁸

The earliest black pentecostal churches were planted by Caribbean pastors and congregants who changed the face of the British church by bringing their pentecostal faith with them to the UK.³⁶⁹ These believers and leaders belonged to COGIC, NTCG and COGOP

³⁶⁴ David Olusoga, *Black and British: A Forgotten History* (London: Macmillan, 2016) 489-520.

³⁶⁵ As Akala explains 'Nobody told white Britain that, over there in the colonies, Caribbeans and Asians were being told that Britain was their mother country, that it was the home of peace and prosperity and that they would be welcomed with open arms by their loving motherland.' Akala, *Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire* (London: Two Roads, 2018) 7.

³⁶⁶ Mukti Barton, *Rejection, Resistance and Resurrection: Speaking out on racism in the church* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2005) 33-36, 45; Beckford, *Dread and Pentecostal*, 15.

³⁶⁷ Aldred, *Thinking Outside the Box*, 65-66.

³⁶⁸ Alexander, "Breaking Every Fetter?" 114-117.

³⁶⁹ Linda Woodhead and Rebecca Catto, eds, *Religion and Change in Modern Britain* (Oxon/New York:

in Jamaica and considered themselves to have a spiritual, missionary purpose in coming to Britain, not simply a personal and socio-economic motivation.³⁷⁰ Ira V. Brooks, in writing the history of the NTCG, explains the racial hostility they experienced, describing how the far-right National Front desecrated the NTCG building in Sheffield in 1978 with graffiti on the pulpit and interior walls.³⁷¹ He explains that the ‘harassment...was deeply disturbing’ so much so that some black ministers left to go to Canada and the USA.³⁷² There is no doubt that the USA was a similarly hostile context for black people, however the perception may have been, in light of the gains of the Civil Rights Era, that black people were able to achieve greater equality in America as opposed to in the heart of the old Empire.³⁷³ Whether or not these impressions were substantiated, the willingness to move to the USA illustrates the depth of the challenge faced by black people in British society. Despite the prevalence of the church-world dualism within the imagination of classical pentecostals, it is clear that these painful experiences were not kept separate from the ecclesial life but had a holistic impact on black Christians and black churches.

4.1.2.2.1 Social and Political Organising

Brooks’ 1982 work was indeed prophetic, capturing both the challenging atmosphere of the time and the urgency of action to create a better future. The call to action epitomised in his work, would in the 1980s, be embodied by a few individuals in black pentecostal churches who organised themselves and their peers in order to address the needs being faced by

Routledge, 2012) 71.

³⁷⁰ Malcolm Calley, *God’s People: West Indian Pentecostal Sects in England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965) 30.

³⁷¹ Ira V. Brooks, *Where do we go from here? A history of 25 years of the New Testament Church of God in the United Kingdom - 1955-1980* (London: Charles Raper, 1982) 53.

³⁷² Brooks, *Where do we go from here?* 25.

³⁷³ Elaine Bowes explained that Rev Carmel Jones, founder of the PCU was inspired by the Black Panthers in the USA, to work towards black self-determination in Britain. Elaine Bowes, interview, June 2019.

their community and their neighbours in Britain's inner cities. Rev Carmel Jones, an ordained minister in COGIC founded the PCU in Balham, South London in 1980, after repeated stories of discrimination by bank managers.³⁷⁴ In Birmingham, pentecostal leader Pastor Joseph Corbett of Shiloh Pentecostal Fellowship was at the forefront of a united churches forum, out of which the United Churches Housing Association was founded in 1989.³⁷⁵ Bishop Theophilus McCalla, Bishop Wilton Powell and Rev Horatio Fearon of COGOP founded the Nehemiah Housing Association in Birmingham, in the same year.³⁷⁶ For these African Caribbean pentecostals, their faith was brought to bear on the realities of their experience as Brits newly arrived from the Caribbean, racialised as black, in a hostile majority white environment. As leaders who themselves experienced discrimination, they forged plans and organisations to respond to the precarity of their socio-economic lives, with the help of God. They embody (in theological terms) the 'pneumatic integralism' in which the whole person and the whole life of the community is caught up in believers' imaginations vis-à-vis pentecostal spirituality.

4.1.2.2.2 What About the Women?

The absence of women's voices in the stories of these organisations should not be misunderstood as an indication that women were not involved at the core of social response and political organisation. Women have been recognised by scholars as representing both the foundation and backbone of black pentecostal churches including in Britain, even though they have not been recognised proportionately in leadership.³⁷⁷ Elaine

³⁷⁴ Elaine Bowes, Interview, June 2019; Carmel Jones, *Autobiography of my life from age 11 to 80*, accessed December 7, 2020, https://www.slideshare.net/PCUUK/rev-carmel-jones-autobiography-autobiography-of-my-life-from-age-11-to-80?qid=3563acd7-d710-434d-96d4-2f15a6a12fba&v=&b=&from_search=1, 24.

³⁷⁵ Kevin Gulliver and Dawn Prentice, *Walls of Courage: The History of Nehemiah United Churches Housing Association 1989 to 2014* (Something Worth Saying Communications, 2014) 22, 24.

³⁷⁶ Gulliver and Prentice, *Walls of Courage*, 22

³⁷⁷ Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 225-7. Gilkes, "If it wasn't for the women..."

Foster describes this phenomenon which black (often but not exclusively pentecostal) churches as a convergence of two pyramids which are superimposed on one another:

'The first pyramid is inverted and represents the 'female' Church. In this pyramid lies the spirituality, the life-giving and life-sustaining nature of the Church. The second pyramid is the upright pyramid. It represents the church in all its patriarchal and hierarchical glory, and contains all the leadership, juridical and priestly roles. The first pyramid is inverted to represent the vast number of women actively involved in the spiritual life and upkeep of the churches.'³⁷⁸

However, this dynamic in which men hold positional power while women do the bulk of the labour is not only the reality of life within the church, in relation to church governance, it is also the case of when it comes to public leadership and community engagement. Though men are named as founders and often heralded as the leaders of community organisations, it has historically been the unseen and unpaid labour of African Caribbean women which has formed the basis of social response as they have served the neediest within and beyond the church walls. As Nicole Toulis explains in her research at a NTCG congregation in England:

'The official purpose of the 'Ladies' Ministry' is: 'to encourage spiritual growth, personal development, and leadership among women; and to contribute to the general welfare of the home, church, community, and the world.' This translates into evangelism, temporal work such as fund-raising activities, providing baskets of food to the poor or bereaved, visiting the sick and spiritual endeavours such as prayer and Bible study.'³⁷⁹

While historically pentecostal women may indeed take on the bulk of caring for their neighbours and fellow brethren in informal or unseen ways, they have not been entirely absent from leadership positions. There is some indication that women's leadership has been recognised in the community organisations led by pentecostals in Britain. In terms of our case studies, the PCU invited two women to join the Board of Directors in 1990,

³⁷⁸ Foster, "Women and the Inverted Pyramid of the Black Churches," 45-68.

³⁷⁹ Nicole Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 251-2.

although its original Board was comprised of four men.³⁸⁰ The Nehemiah Housing Association included two women; Caroline McKen and Sonia Brown as founding members of the Board of Directors.³⁸¹

4.1.2.3 Summary

Overall, we have observed that pentecostalism in Jamaica embodies a struggle for spiritual, cultural and political identity and wholeness. Jamaican pentecostalism, has been forged through negotiations between African influences and those from Europe and America, most notably under colonisation. Jamaican pentecostalism as an example of black pentecostalism in a broader sense, has been deeply formed by the pneumatic dualisms of American and British revivalist culture. As a result, black pentecostal spirituality though embodied in a religious sense, is often disembodied when related to the political. Nevertheless, there has often been some motivation towards social care in line with the biblical imperative. Yet, we have observed that some African Caribbean Pentecostals organised politically to address the needs of their community and neighbours. For these spirit-baptised leaders, their encounter with God, and with socio-economic and racial disenfranchisement, led to a holistic ministry which engaged with public issues.

4.1.3 Conclusion

In this section we have seen that the earliest classical pentecostals in Britain belonged to two distinct streams both of which were the result of various contributing elements. Britain's revival history and most notably the Welsh revival, opened up the potential for

³⁸⁰ Financial Conduct Authority, "The Pentecostal Credit Union Limited: Annual Return and Accounts 30/09/1990," accessed December 7, 2020.

³⁸¹ Financial Conduct Authority, "Nehemiah United Churches Housing Association Limited: Registration of New Society 22/01/1988," accessed December 7, 2020.

pentecostalism to be received in Britain. Yet Azusa Street is still important as a catalyst in the story of British pentecostalism, and a place of significance in the minds of British pentecostal leaders. Overall, British pentecostalism inherited the pneumatic dualism that characterised most of the various revivals which forge the movement. Encounter with the Spirit was often limited the Spirit to the personal and religious rather than being understood in public and political ways. Jamaican pentecostalism, though retaining aspects from African spirituality and witnessing the exploits of Christians from other traditions, conformed to the apolitical stance of many of their American siblings. The political potential of pentecostals in Jamaica was difficult to detect, however in Britain we saw instances of community development which went beyond charity, to redress economic and housing injustice in particular. In this sense, we saw evidence of pneumatic integralism, in the midst of an overall dualistic worldview.

4.2 Unequal Britain: The Context of Classical British Pentecostalism

We have sought in the previous section to understand the history of classical pentecostalism in Britain, by analysing spirituality and theology in the context of social, political and socio-economic realities. In this section we will turn to focus on contemporary classical British pentecostalism. Analysing this movement and especially its 'progressive' aspects, depends upon a familiarity with its social, political and socio-economic context. Primarily, this is due to the approach I have taken in this thesis, in which classical pentecostalism has been presented as a movement among the working class, racially marginalised people and women in the midst of economically unequal, white dominated and patriarchal societies. It is incumbent upon us to explore the extent to which this remains true for pentecostals today. The second reason to explore the contemporary British context is because this thesis is concerned with public theology and public action which cannot be developed in isolation

from an awareness of the realities of social and economic life. We must have a sense of the social, economic and political issues at play in contemporary Britain in order to analyse the theological positions and actions being taken by pentecostals in their ministry.

In this section therefore, I will begin by exploring the nature of socio-economic inequality in Britain and particularly the dehumanising narratives and realities of neoliberal capitalism. I will argue that classical pentecostals in Britain are now able to attract significant middle-class memberships and this has changed their positioning in society, how they continue to reside within a context where poverty and economic precarity undermines the quality of life for many people. I will then discuss the matter of race inequality – bearing in mind the intersectionality of racial and class inequalities which means as we will see, that black and some Asian groups are overrepresented among the poorest. We will see that Britain continues to be unequal society for people on the basis of race, because of the normalising of whiteness and the ‘othering’ of UK minority ethnic groups. We will see that classical pentecostals in Britain fall along racial lines in many places, and while there are signs of diversity in congregations there are very few positive signs in leadership teams. Finally, I will discuss the matter of gender inequality in Britain which continues in many areas of life, although there have been improvements. We will see what for classical pentecostals, women’s power is limited not only by wider social norms, but by theological perspectives which reinforce patriarchy.

4.2.1 Capitalism and Class in Contemporary Britain

In recent years the question of power, economics and wealth have returned to the fore particularly in the light of the global financial crash of 2008. For many, the crash itself revealed the risks of neoliberal policies which favour the low regulation of financial

markets.³⁸² For some analysts, the conditions for the crash were set by the agenda of market-driven politics and the match was lit by those at the apex of our global capitalist system who risked everything, assuming their own invincibility and that of the system.³⁸³ When the crash occurred, the British public held financiers and bankers responsible as well as politicians, increasing the levels of public distrust. The line between the masses and the elite, or those with power and those without, seemed even clearer. The events which followed served to reinforce the growing suspicion that the interests of the most powerful institutions and people were bound together. As the British government bailed out the banks and bank employees continued to collect substantial bonuses many were angered at the government's perceived complicity in elitism.³⁸⁴ The subsequent austerity agenda, which signalled huge cuts to schools, healthcare, welfare and community services only stoked more public anger and concerns about the exacerbation of socio-economic inequality.³⁸⁵ While neoliberal capitalism has been credited with encouraging entrepreneurialism and innovation, it has also been held responsible for increased poverty, unemployment and underemployment in a society modelled on an economic game of 'survival of the fittest'.³⁸⁶ It is this game of survival which determines the nature of class, the potential for social mobility and concerns about poverty and socio-economic marginalisation in Britain. Scholars have also argued that neo-liberal capitalism is not in fact neutral in the matter of race, but serves to reinforce racial inequalities, which we will address in the following section.³⁸⁷

³⁸² Will Davies, "Post-crash capitalism: the new realism," *Public Policy Research* 18 (2011): 187-8.

³⁸³ Adrian Buckley, *Financial Crisis: Causes, Context, and Consequences* (Harlow: Pearson Education UK, 2011) 201-3, 209, 214-5.

³⁸⁴ Buckley, *Financial Crisis*, 260-3.

³⁸⁵ "Austerity timeline," Coventry University, accessed May 13, 2020.

<https://breadlineresearch.coventry.ac.uk/resources/austerity-timeline-2/>

³⁸⁶ Stephanie Taylor, "A New Mystique? Working for Yourself in the Neoliberal Economy," *The Sociological Review* 63, no. 1_suppl (May 2015): 177; John Clarke, "After Neoliberalism?" *Cultural Studies*, 24:3, 2010: 378-80.

³⁸⁷ D.J. Roberts and M. Mahtani, "Neoliberalizing Race, Racing Neoliberalism: Placing "Race" in Neoliberal

4.2.1.1 Defining Class in Britain

Recent research has demonstrated that defining class is more complex than it used to be. If historically, class could be identified by education and occupation; today the link between education and occupation is not as straight forward. In researching the 'degree generation' in Bristol, Ann-Marie Bathmaker *et al* find evidence that even after overcoming the barriers to attend the more prestigious universities in Britain, working class students who left with the same degree as their middle-class counterparts struggled to enter into jobs and further study after their degree. The research discovered that economic limitations resulted in working class students having to work while studying, which took away time for the social networking or voluntary roles which enabled their more affluent colleagues to succeed afterwards. They conclude that 'a degree is not enough'.³⁸⁸ In effect, the goal posts have shifted when it comes to class and thus social mobility. Rather than thinking solely about education and employment, class might be identified according to three dimensions; economic income, social networks and cultural activities.³⁸⁹ BBC's Great British Class Survey of 2013 resulted in a seven-category model for understanding class in contemporary Britain: the Elite (6% nationally), the Established middle class (25%), the Technical middle class (6%), New affluent workers (15%), the Traditional working class (14%), Emergent service workers (19%), and the Precariat, or precarious proletariat (15%).³⁹⁰ This data suggests that over a

Discourses." *Antipode* 42 (2010) 248-257; Reddie, *Working Against the Grain*, 6.

³⁸⁸ Anne-Marie Bathmaker, Harriet Bradley, Anthony Hoare, Nicola Ingram, Richard Waller and Jessie Abrahams, *Higher Education, Social Class and Social Mobility: The Degree Generation* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016) 148.

³⁸⁹ Mike Savage, Fiona Devine, Niall Cunningham, Mark Taylor, Yaojun Li, Johs Hjellbrekke, Brigitte Le Roux, Sam Friedman, and Andrew Miles, "A New Model of Social Class? Findings from the BBC's Great British Class Survey Experiment," *Sociology* 47, no. 2 (April 2013): 223.

³⁹⁰ Mike Savage et al., "A New Model of Social Class?" 230; Fiona Devine and Mike Savage, "BBC Great British Class Survey, 2011-2013," UK Data Service (2015) SN: 7616.

third of people in Britain are living in or at risk of poverty due to low paid irregular service work or underemployment and unemployment.

The visit of the UN Special Rapporteur Professor Philip Alston to the UK offered a moment of clarity on these matters even though his findings were dismissed by the government. He opens his report stating that in the light of the UK's wealth as the world's fifth largest economy, 'it thus seems patently unjust and contrary to British values that so many people are living in poverty'.³⁹¹ The problem of class inequality and poverty is, of course, longstanding in Britain even though the UN Special Rapporteur may be considered to be against 'British values' in theory. It is also important to acknowledge that the global nature of our economic system means that class also has global elements. The elite is no longer simply a national group, but a global group who function across national borders.³⁹² For many people, economic success is increasingly dependent not only on success within the UK but also being able to find success in a global market place, with global competition at the foundation.³⁹³ Scholars have also highlighted the risk of the developing 'global underclass', such as in the world of online technology where workers often lack access to their rights and fair wages.³⁹⁴ Therefore, Britain's inequalities are tied into a global picture now more than ever before due to global technologies.

³⁹¹ Professor Philip Alston, "Statement on Visit to the United Kingdom," United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, accessed 29th July 2020, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23881>.

³⁹² Manfred B. Steger and Ravi K. Roy, *Neoliberalism: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 38.

³⁹³ Colin Leys, *Market-driven politics: neoliberal democracy and the public interest* (London: Verso, 2001) 211.

³⁹⁴ Mary L. Gray and Siddharth Suri, *Ghost Work: How to Stop Silicon Valley from Building a New Global Underclass* (New York/Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2019) xxvii.

4.2.1.2 Class, Pentecostals and Social Mobility

Pentecostalism has been presented historically in this thesis as a faith of the working class and the poor. William Kay's research in 2000 affirmed that pentecostalism still appealed particularly to working class communities in Britain.³⁹⁵ However, in contemporary Britain, pentecostals are no longer restricted to the lower socio-economic positions. In some cases, pentecostal churches acquire significant wealth through donations from congregations with large middle-class contingents and enjoy the benefits of extensive staff teams and church-owned buildings.³⁹⁶ Classical British pentecostals have to some extent, experienced the social mobility so often promised but underdelivered for working class white, black and Asian communities. Scholars have demonstrated that social mobility may generate certain adaptations as pentecostals may 'shield' elements of their working-class heritage that might be unappealing to middle-class cohorts.³⁹⁷ This adaptation may indeed be welcome for those who see this movement away from its working-class roots as a sign of progress and maturity for the movement. However, consideration must also be given to how these shifts may isolate the working-class and those living in poverty.

When analysing the social mobility of pentecostals, research tends to focus on the link between conversion and the financial advancement that comes from changes in social activities such as abstaining from drinking in pubs and gambling which channelled money out of the home.³⁹⁸ However, when it comes to tracing the social mobility of pentecostals in

³⁹⁵ Kay, *Pentecostals in Britain*, 199.

³⁹⁶ Taking Assemblies of God as an example, the Charity Commission lists the income of three of their congregations in three large cities in England for the financial year ending in March 2019. The highest level of congregational donations was £2.4m where the church's total income was £3m, the second church had a total income of £4.6m with £1m coming from donations, and the third church's income is modest in comparison but not unsubstantial, at £620k with £480k coming from donations. Charity Commission for England and Wales.

³⁹⁷ Jens Koehrsen, "When Sects Become Middle Class: Impression Management among Middle-Class Pentecostals in Argentina," *Sociology of Religion* 78, no. 3 (Fall 2017): 326-327.

³⁹⁸ Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 161-2; Andrew Chesnut, *Born Again in Brazil: The Pentecostal Boom and the Pathogens of Poverty* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1997) 16-19.

Britain, the picture is more complex. Social mobility for classical pentecostal leaders and congregations might also be linked to the focus on individual and/or community success which has generated greater participation in education, training and professional work. For the Caribbean pentecostals arriving in significant numbers during the 1950s onwards, their double commitment to the Gospel and to community empowerment were intertwined.³⁹⁹ For these groups, the hope for a better life was not brought about by seeking a quick fix (although this messaging has been popularised by many prosperity preachers) but through prayerful hard work, determination and often education. Classical British pentecostals, whether white working class, British subjects from the Caribbean have subverted the outcomes associated with their peers, through a struggle that was at once spiritual and economic, recognised both as a blessing from God, and dependent on their own hard work.⁴⁰⁰

4.2.1.3 Education and Clergy

However, while middle class features like higher education, training and professionalisation may feature more prominently in the pentecostal membership, there is a mixed engagement with ministerial training and theological education among clergy. We saw that the earliest pioneers valued education and training, with Charles Fox Parham and William Seymour both involved in theological education as teacher and student respectively. We also saw that pentecostal denominations have valued spaces for learning from the outset, including for women.⁴⁰¹ However, pentecostalism has often been spoken of as an anti-intellectual movement which is resistant to academic learning, particularly critical theological

³⁹⁹ This came through profoundly in the interviews at NUCHA and the PCU.

⁴⁰⁰ For a recent discussion of pentecostalism in relation to Max Weber's "The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism," see Benjamin Kirby "Pentecostalism, economics, capitalism: putting the Protestant Ethic to work," *Religion*, 49:4, (2019): 571-591.

⁴⁰¹ Conn, *Like a Mighty Army*, 245.

education.⁴⁰² In contemporary Britain we see a continuation of both tendencies, in a commitment to theological training on the one hand, and a reluctance to formalise training as a prerequisite for ministry in some denominations. The NTCG runs a Leadership Training Centre which delivers theological education and training for ministers as part of the ordination process.⁴⁰³ Their courses include modules which engage with theological ethics as well as the challenges of postmodernity for Christian ministry.⁴⁰⁴ NTCG has a historic commitment to theological study including public lectures and they are currently developing a pentecostal Heritage Centre, which will include archives and resources relating to pentecostal studies in Britain.⁴⁰⁵ COGOP has developed the 'Timothy School of Ministry' which serves both lay people and ministers through practical ministry training as well as biblical and theological study.⁴⁰⁶ COGIC UK founded 'Calvary Theological College' to train lay people and ministers with a focus on doctrine, biblical studies, children's ministry and evangelism.⁴⁰⁷ While AOG runs its own bible college which offers theological education and training for ministers, this is not compulsory for those in ordained leadership.⁴⁰⁸ What is missing in all of these courses, is theological training on the matters of public life, politics or any matters of social justice. The courses seem designed primarily to equip those who

⁴⁰² Marius Nel, "Rather Spirit-Filled than Learned! Pentecostalism's Tradition of Anti-Intellectualism and Pentecostal Theological Scholarship," *Verbum Et Ecclesia* 37, no. 1 (2016): 2-4, 5-7; David Muir, "Theological Education Among British Pentecostals and Charismatics," in *Pentecostals and Charismatics in Britain: An Anthology*, ed. Aldred, 163-178.

⁴⁰³ "Prospectus 2019-21," New Testament Church of God Leadership Training Centre, accessed November 18, 2020, <https://ntcg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/NTCG-Prospectus-2020web.pdf>, 7-8.

⁴⁰⁴ "Doctrinal Courses," New Testament Church of God Leadership Training Centre, accessed November 18, 2020, <https://ntcg.org.uk/education/courses/doctrinal/>.

⁴⁰⁵ "NTCG Heritage Centre and the Roswith Gerloff Collection," New Testament Church of God, accessed November 18, 2020, <https://ntcg.org.uk/history/>.

⁴⁰⁶ "Timothy School of Ministry," Church of God of Prophecy, accessed November 18, 2020, <https://cogop.org.uk/tsm/>.

⁴⁰⁷ "Calvary Theological College," Church of God in Christ UK, accessed November 18, 2020, <https://cogic.org.uk/2020/04/13/calvary-theological-college/>.

⁴⁰⁸ Assemblies of God offers theological education and training through Mathersey Hall Bible College. "Standards and Validation," Mathersey Hall Bible College, accessed November 18, 2020, <https://www.matterseyhall.com/courses/standards-validation/>.

preach and minister within the congregation or those who seek to be evangelists, or missionaries overseas. Theological education at least in terms of denominations, seems marked by a dualism, in which ministry is focussed on the leadership of church with no real public expectations beyond the evangelistic and missional.

Despite these denominational limitations, individual leaders in the classical pentecostal tradition are still make learning a core part of their development. Dr Carver Anderson who leads Bringing Hope, was ordained in the NTCG and subsequently undertook a PhD in practical theology with an emphasis in the outcomes for black men in the criminal justice system.⁴⁰⁹ Both of the senior pastors of ECCi, the major church case study I have conducted, have undergone theological training, and had continued to study as a part of their own formation for ministry. As ministers within Assemblies of God this was not compulsory but the result of their own desire to be equipped for ministry. As leaders of a congregation which is mixed in socio-economic terms, but in a relatively deprived area, their relatively unique capacity to critically reflect, adapt and remain relevant to the changing landscape may well be sharpened by an ongoing commitment to learning.

4.2.1.4 Human Flourishing and Pentecostalism under Neoliberal Capitalism

While some pentecostals have managed to survive and even thrive within the unequal socio-economic system which characterises Britain, the problems of class and inequality remain pertinent for pentecostals seeking to witness to the Gospel in this context. As we consider British public life and the potential for pentecostals to address the issues which undermine social justice, it is important to name and critique what is currently shaping British life and inevitably also impacting on the life of pentecostals in Britain. From a theological

⁴⁰⁹ Rev Dr Carver Anderson, "Towards a practical theology for effective responses to Black Young Men associated with crime for Black Majority Churches," (PhD Diss.: University of Birmingham, 2013).

anthropological perspective, we might critique the impact of neoliberal capitalism on the basis of its undermining of human dignity and human flourishing. Neoliberal capitalism is characterised by some as resting on the overarching ideology that ‘the production and exchange of material goods’ should be ‘at the heart of the human experience.’⁴¹⁰ It is clear, that this political and economic philosophy stands squarely against the biblical narratives in which human experience is centred around covenantal love of God and neighbour.⁴¹¹ A system that views human beings purely in economic terms (as opposed to social, spiritual terms) ignores their holistic needs. This reduction of the human being to the consumer/producer, fails to acknowledge the diversity of human beings and particularly those who are unable or unwilling to play either role, thus excluding them from an economic life framed in these terms. Those with disabilities or long-term health issues, the elderly or those who are neuro-diverse, all risk falling through the cracks in a world which only values those who produce what others desire to consume. The shortcomings of this system are increasingly clear, with scholars imagining what political and economic philosophy may emerge after neoliberalism, in light of their awareness that ‘the emperor’ (neoliberalism) ‘has no clothes’.⁴¹²

The focus on the centrality of material goods and exchange, contrasts squarely with classical pentecostalism’s Holiness heritage, in which distinctiveness from the ‘world’ is paramount, particularly in relation to the temptations of greed. However, the promises of capitalism and the promotion of neoliberal values have not in fact, remained ‘in the world’; they have been imbibed even by some classical pentecostals. On the one hand, we might

⁴¹⁰ Manfred B. Stegar and Ravi K. Roy, *Neoliberalism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 39.

⁴¹¹ Matthew 22:37-39

⁴¹² Dr Johannes Meier, “Beyond Neoliberalism: When an Orthodoxy hits an Expiration Date,” accessed July 28, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rbp6DMclMQ>.

see the infiltration of neoliberal capitalist values in those pentecostal pastors and church leaders whose entrepreneurial interests are exhibited through the production of saleable items as a core part of their ministry.⁴¹³ However, the most obvious example of this may be in the promulgation of the 'prosperity gospel' which takes many forms, but overall supports the notion that increased material wealth should be expected as a measure of a faithful Christian life. While pentecostalism has the resources to resist these temptations through its Holiness heritage, in some instances, it is entangled in ideas which undermine its potential to access those resources. In discussing the nature of black pentecostalism in Britain specifically, David Muir explains in dialogue with Luke Bretherton:

'there are particular tendencies associated with materialism, the prosperity gospel (where pentecostal leaders are seen as 'crypto-entrepreneurs in clerical garb') and hyper-individualism in pentecostalism that attenuate any possibilities for 'converting capitalism' as envisaged by Bretherton.'⁴¹⁴

Scholars have shown that the allure of the prosperity gospel is prominent for those pentecostals in Britain who have been heavily influenced by American evangelicalism, and particularly those who have arrived in Britain from Africa where America's prosperity message has taken root very successfully.⁴¹⁵ However, the prosperity gospel does not always promote a self-centred individualism which negates care for those in need. Some pentecostals in Britain demonstrate a hybrid spirituality in which the prosperity gospel and the call for social action are interweaved. For these pentecostals, gaining wealth is not simply for one's own material success but for the sake of addressing the social needs of

⁴¹³ Sanya Ojo, "African Pentecostalism as Entrepreneurial Space." *Journal of Enterprising Communities* 9, no. 3 (2015): 237-8.

⁴¹⁴ Muir, "Power in Black and Pentecostal," 256-7.

⁴¹⁵ Leslie Fesenmyer, "'Living as Londoners do': born-again Christians in convivial East London." *Social Anthropology*, 28: (2020) 405, 412-3; Ojo, "African Pentecostalism as Entrepreneurial Space," 242, 244; Glyn J. Ackerley, *Importing Faith: The Effect of American "Word of Faith" Culture on Contemporary English Evangelical Revivalism* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015) 123.

others.⁴¹⁶ This approach is not shared by the many classical pentecostals who would reject prosperity theology as a distortion of the gospel. However, subtler forms of 'health and wealth' beliefs can be retained in congregational life, even by those who might reject the prosperity Gospel outright. Beliefs about the materiality of God's blessings and the expectation that God can intervene and answer prayer, can easily lead to assumptions about one's entitlement to such miraculous material provision.⁴¹⁷ The line between hope that God may answer prayer for a financial provision, and the expectation that one is entitled to such miraculous provision can sometimes be hard to detect.

What we can see in prosperity theology is a desire for believers to experience a tangible manifestation of God's blessing, to ensure a future for themselves in an often-hostile environment. The impact of neoliberal capitalism means that hyper-individualism, competition and greed can so often seep into theological imagination, all of which undermine the possibility of structural critique and organised political response. In this, we might see a resonance with traditional African spiritual perspectives in which each person is responsible for their own economic success through gaining the favour of ancestral spirits and deities. By imagining God in Christ as the caterer to individual material needs, as opposed to the one whose liberation is communal and holistic, prosperity gospels lead pentecostals into another trap, with the gospel being reduced to a personal economic rescue plan, which leaves the wider structures intact.

⁴¹⁶ Richard Burgess, "African Pentecostal spirituality and civic engagement," 258; Andrew Davies and Mark Cartledge, "A Megachurch in a Megacity: A Study of Cyberspace Representation," *PentecoStudies*, 13:1, (2013): 68-9, 70-3.

⁴¹⁷ "The Finnish Gold Story," *The Church of God Evangel* (Cleveland: Church of God Publishers, 1913).

4.2.1.5 Summary

We have seen in this section that classical British pentecostalism finds itself at a place of transition in terms of its location with a society which is socio-economically unequal. While historically, it has been known as a faith of the working class and poor, today it enjoys the benefits of more middle-class congregants and the resources this provides for staff and church assets. Despite this, the complication of class in Britain and the impact of neoliberal capitalism, reinforces the commodifying of human life, and a reductionist anthropology. Classical pentecostalism is impacted by these values to varying extents, even while being buffered against them by their Holiness heritage which calls them to be 'in the world' but not 'of it'.

4.2.2 Race in Contemporary Britain

4.2.2.1 Diversity and Inequality

For the last 72 years, commentators have sought to make sense of the Britain which has been emerging. Today the UK is home to people of many different cultures and ethnic groups, many being descendants of those British subjects who moved to the 'mother land' from the Commonwealth, but also many from countries across the globe. According to the most recent data, the population of England and Wales is 86% white, 7.5% identify as Asian, 3.3% as African or Caribbean, 2.2% as having mixed heritage and 1% as Arab or 'other'.⁴¹⁸ For many, this melting pot of cultures, is understood to beauty of multicultural Britain, where all people can belong and succeed. The presence of black and brown people in corporate offices, on TV or in parliament lead many to believe that race no longer matters,

⁴¹⁸ "Population of England and Wales," Cabinet Office, accessed May 20, 2020, <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/national-and-regional-populations/population-of-england-and-wales/latest>.

and that we may even have entered into a post-racial reality where outcomes are generally fair for everyone. It is true that some progress has been made; legislation has been put in place to prosecute those who use racist language, commit or incite racist violence or are proven to have discriminated on the basis of race. However, as Akala explains, the focus tends to be on the interpersonal matters, rather than on the ‘far more egregious and damaging’ manifestations of racism by those in power.⁴¹⁹ It is these ‘far more egregious’ forms that I want to engage with in this section.

Research in the area of race and inequality paints a picture of biases, prejudices and racism which are inherent in British systems and structures. The UK Prime Minister commissioned an audit of racial inequality in 2016 in order to investigate whether public services were really serving all people equally or whether there were differences in outcomes based on race and ethnicity.⁴²⁰ The results clearly indicate stark racial inequalities in terms of life chances and opportunities, as well as in experiences of public services. The data demonstrated that households which identified as African, Caribbean, Asian (particularly Bangladeshi and Pakistani) or ‘other’ were most likely to live in poverty in deprived areas and as a result their children twice as likely to live in persistent poverty than white children.⁴²¹ While poverty affects all racial and ethnic groups, African, Caribbean and some Asian groups are overrepresented, meaning poverty and race intersect as justice issues in Britain. These statistics do not only reflect the condition of those who have newly arrived in the UK from Africa, Asia or the Caribbean, but the second and third generations of those who arrived in Britain as early as the 1940s. Making one’s life in Britain is easier said

⁴¹⁹ Akala, *Natives*, 11.

⁴²⁰ “Race Disparity Audit: Summary Findings from the Ethnicity Facts and Figures Website: June 2019,” Cabinet Office, accessed May 20, 2020, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/race-disparity-audit>.

⁴²¹ “Race Disparity Audit,” Cabinet Office, 27-28

than done for many groups, especially those with global majority heritage. Employment for these groups which are already more likely to experience poverty, is also conditioned by race and active discrimination which has been highlighted in research by London School of Economics.⁴²² The correlation between the statistics on poverty, education, employment and housing is stark, demonstrating the manner in patterns of inequality are seen all the way through Britain's social and economic life.⁴²³ Poverty and racism therefore, work in an intersectional manner for black, some Asian and other minority ethnic (BAME) groups in Britain.

One of the areas in which racism is experienced in a most direct (in terms of interpersonal as well as structural) manner is in policing. In 2019, data confirmed that black people are more likely to be stopped and searched than any other ethnic group, and almost 10 times more than white people.⁴²⁴ They are also most likely to be arrested out of all ethnic groups.⁴²⁵ The impact of the over-policing of black and some Asian communities is important to recognise for many reasons but particularly because of the long term impact of having a criminal record, which further undermines positive life chances by making access to jobs and housing more difficult or impossible in many cases, thus reinforcing cycles of poverty.⁴²⁶

⁴²² Eva Derous, Roland Pepermans, and Ann Marie Ryan, "Ethnic Discrimination during Résumé Screening: Interactive Effects of Applicants' Ethnic Salience with Job Context," *Human Relations* 70, no. 7 (July 2017): 861.

⁴²³ "Black Caribbean Ethnic Group: Facts and Figures (June 2019)," Cabinet Office, accessed May 20, 2020, <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/summaries/black-caribbean-ethnic-group>; "Pupil exclusions (January 2020)," Cabinet Office, accessed May 20, 2020; Berni Graham, Clarissa White, Amy Edwards, Sylvia Potter and Cathy Street, "School exclusion: a literature review on the continued disproportionate exclusion of certain children (May 2019)," accessed July 20, 2020, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/800028/Timpson_review_of_school_exclusion_literature_review.pdf.

⁴²⁴ "Black Caribbean Ethnic Group: Facts and Figures," Cabinet Office.

⁴²⁵ "Black Caribbean Ethnic Group: Facts and Figures," Cabinet Office.

⁴²⁶ Social Exclusion Unit, *Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners* (London: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2002) 5, 16, 18-22.

Overall, these statistics demonstrate that while socio-economic inequality may in fact be an overarching issue for all racial and ethnic groups in Britain, there is an additional racial dynamic to inequality which must be faced and explored to more fully understand the nature of life in Britain, and to name ‘the least of these.’

4.2.2.2 Racialising Humanity: White Power and Exclusion

So how might we begin to interpret these statistics? Primarily, we must recognise the power of whiteness as a paradigm shaping British life. We have seen in the story of the Windrush generation that Britain proved to be a hostile environment for black Caribbeans and this would also be true for subsequent arrivals from Pakistan, India and elsewhere. These realities should, I suggest, be viewed through the lens of history, and specifically the history of Britain’s global empire. Philosophical narratives of white (European) superiority were prominent in British public imagination during the era in which Britain sought to establish its global empire as Naomi Zack explains:

‘the white race was upheld as the most civilised, both morally and intellectually superior, while blacks were relegated to the bottom in culture, character and intellect...indigenes or Amerindians, and “Orientals” or Asians were also ranked.’⁴²⁷

This categorisation of human beings according to race, can be traced through philosophers as early as Plato and Aristotle, but its culmination occurs during the era of European colonisation. The notion of racial hierarchies can be seen in the thinking of Kant, Hume, Nietzsche among others, who reinforced the notion of white supremacy in the public imagination and legitimised white power in institutions and structures.⁴²⁸ British Christianity was not only formed by these same white supremacist ideologies but played an indelible

⁴²⁷ Naomi Zack, *Philosophy of Race: An Introduction* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018) 10.

⁴²⁸ Zack, *Philosophy of Race*, 4.

role in their propagation in Europe and especially through missions abroad in the countries to which Britain's Empire extended. As Anthony Reddie explains 'the missionary impulse of the Great Commission was interpreted as a means of imposing Eurocentric values on the cultures of non-Europeans around the world.'⁴²⁹

The racial inequalities we have noted in contemporary Britain seem almost inevitable when we consider them in the light of this history, or at least inevitable without a collective commitment to resistance. A society developed for and by white Europeans on the basis of their superiority will surely fail to serve the needs and interests of people with heritage in the majority world without there being significant shifts in power. The same can be said for the churches developed within these societies, which imbibe a 'colonial Christianity' in which 'whiteness' is considered normative and 'the aspirant standard of excellence.'⁴³⁰ Creating these shifts in power is the task of decolonisation. For Pentecostalism, a movement deeply formed by white theological imagination, decolonisation is crucial to its future. In this next section, we will consider the matters of race, power and exclusion as they currently appear within classical British pentecostalism.

4.2.2.3 Race and Classical British Pentecostalism

The predominance of white power and the ethnic divisions which revealed themselves in the early days of the pentecostal movement remain prominent for classical pentecostals to this day. I will explore the matter of race, power and inclusion by analysing the leadership teams of the respective denominations I am considering in this research. As many of the classical British denominations belong to American-initiated networks, we will also highlight the American context in certain instances, and then speak to the national and local levels. In

⁴²⁹ Reddie, *Theologising Brexit*, 67.

⁴³⁰ Reddie, *Theologising Brexit*, 68.

general, we will see that classical pentecostals whether on an international, national or local level are taking steps towards diversity, although cultural silos remain, and the ongoing work of inclusion is still outstanding.

The COG, based in the USA, has a small proportion of African American, Asian or Latino leaders on their Executive Council.⁴³¹ Within its existing structure Hispanic communities meet separately (most likely due to language differences) but Florida has two separate congregations; 'Florida Tampa' which is majority white and 'Florida-Cocoa' which is majority African American.⁴³² COGOP International demonstrates a more balanced racial mix at the highest level of leadership.⁴³³ Quite distinctly due to its Jamaican roots, the NTCG and the COGOP are both black majority denominations in Britain with very small proportions of white members or leaders.⁴³⁴ AOG in Britain has consistently been led by an entirely white National Leadership Team and Board of Directors despite having a history of including black majority congregations among its membership. The local picture shows signs of hope but there are also causes for concern. Each of the churches I analysed which belonged to AOG exhibited a racial mix at some level. For one of these congregations, racial diversity was confined to the congregation and volunteers but was absent from formal leadership and paid positions. For ECCi (my main case study) and one other congregation I reviewed, ethnic diversity was present at every level of the church's life from the congregation to the most senior leaders. It is possible then, for us to see that individual churches may indeed surpass

⁴³¹ "Leadership." Church of God, accessed November 18, 2020, <http://www.churchofgod.org/leadership>

⁴³² "Divisions," Church of God, accessed November 18, 2020, <http://churchofgod.org/divisions/>; Bradley Dominick Ramsey, "The Issue of separation: on race and the racial ecclesiology of the Church of God" (PhD Diss; University of Birmingham, 2012), 16.

⁴³³ "Inspirational Leadership," Church of God of Prophecy, accessed November 18, 2020, <https://cogop.org/inspirational-leadership/>.

⁴³⁴ NTCG has one white bishop on their national executive team. "Leadership and Staff," New Testament Church of God, accessed November 18, 2020, <https://ntcg.org.uk/about/leadership/>.

the national denomination in matters of diversity. We will analyse the matter of race and power in depth in chapter 6.

4.2.2.4 Summary

We have seen in this section that classical British pentecostalism finds itself in a context of racial inequality and has also inherited a history of racial division. While there are signs of diversity at various levels whether local, national or international, there is also evidence that division between races is prevalent in the US and also in the UK. Where we find diversity, we must engage in an analysis of inclusion, which we will turn to in greater detail in chapter 6. The discussion of inclusion will draw us into an analysis of race and power and to reflect on the need to attend to the embodied experiences for those racialised as black and white in Britain.

4.2.3 Patriarchy and Sexism in Contemporary Britain

4.2.3.1 Women in Philosophy and Theology

Patriarchy appears in a myriad of forms in various nations, histories and religions, and is linked overall to the notion of gender roles. While the basis for gender roles may be traced back to the needs of human beings in prehistoric communities, today social life has moved on in significant ways.⁴³⁵ However, patriarchy has become entrenched philosophically, theologically and practically over centuries. Western philosophers as early as Plato and Aristotle promulgated views about the nature of women as lesser beings to men without regard for how this undermines human flourishing and the life of the family, as Chandrakala Padis argues.⁴³⁶ Views about women's subordination have also been developed within

⁴³⁵ Joseph Martos and Pierre Hégy, "Gender Roles in Family and Culture: The Basis of Sexism in Religion," in *Equal at the Creation: Sexism, Society, and Christian Thought*, ed. Pierre Hégy (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998) 3.

⁴³⁶ Chandrakala Padia. "Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau and Hegel on Women: A Critique." *The Indian Journal of*

Christian theology at the earliest stages. Genevieve Lloyd highlights both Augustine and Aquinas who speak of women as being made less in the image of God than men and being less rational than men.⁴³⁷ The public influence of Christianity in Britain has meant that the Church has rightly faced critique for its complicity in reinforcing gender inequality and the oppression of women. By forming patriarchal narratives rooted in the scriptures, and reinforcing the power of men over women in practice, Christianity has legitimised discrimination against women particularly in the home and the church but also in wider society.⁴³⁸ The spiritualising of gender inequality means that these doctrines and practices become sacred, and thus even today, challenging them must be done very carefully, or may even be beyond the scope for many.⁴³⁹ While the influence of Christian theology may have less authority than it has had previously in British society, the effects of Christian philosophy cannot be easily unwound even by those who might verbalise a rejection of supposed Christian ideals.

These ideas about the nature of women and men have underpinned sexist ideas about women's place in public life. Patriarchy emerged as power had been aligned with men to the disadvantage of women and girls in family life, but also in employment and wider society. Historically, Britain has been hostile to the fight for women's equality as seen most directly in the responses to the women's suffrage movement. Many were opposed to women's suffrage because of an overall belief that women and men must occupy 'separate

Political Science 55, no. 1 (1994): 27-30.

⁴³⁷ Genevieve Lloyd, "Augustine and Aquinas" in *Feminist Theology: a Reader*, ed. Ann Loades (London: SPCK, 1990) 89-98.

⁴³⁸ Daphne Hampson and Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Is There a Place for Feminists in a Christian Church?" *New Blackfriars* 68, no. 801 (1987): 9, 12.

⁴³⁹ Rachel Wood, "Should the Language and Legislation of Women's Rights Be Implemented in the Arguments for Consecrating Women as Bishops in the Church of England?" *Feminist Theology* 17, no. 1 (September 2008): 28-30.

spheres,' with public life and politics especially belonging to men.⁴⁴⁰ However, there were also many women engaged in anti-suffragist movements who agreed with the narratives about women's innate limitations in term of rationality, intellect and temperament.⁴⁴¹ In fact a survey conducted by the Spectator of 1910, revealed that the overwhelming majority of women were against the Bill being put forward demanding the right to vote.⁴⁴² This may indeed be a prime example of the 'internalised oppression' spoken about by feminist writers, the result being that 'the overt use of 'power over' is no longer necessary'.⁴⁴³ It is clear that the philosophical and theological ideas about the nature and role of women not only endorse the power of men over women, but serve to convince that this is both the rational arrangement and divine order.

4.2.3.2 Gender Inequality in Britain

In contemporary Britain, the gendering of 'separate spheres' carries less weight in theory although the practical outworking of these notions is still prevalent and underpins a range of gender-based inequalities as we will see in this section. In order to examine the nature of gender inequality in Britain, we will use the EU's Gender Equality Index which considers equality in the matter of employment, income, education, leadership and health.⁴⁴⁴ In 2019, women in Britain were more likely to be poor than men and had significantly less power in society than men. While women were more educated than men and had higher rates of

⁴⁴⁰ Brian Harrison, *Separate Spheres: The Opposition to Women's Suffrage in Britain* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2012) 56.

⁴⁴¹ Harrison, *Separate Spheres*, 56; Julia Bush, *Women Against the Vote: Female Anti-Suffragism in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 228-9; Lynn Linton et al, "the Idlers Club", *The Idler; an Illustrated Magazine*, 11, no. 2 (1897): 268.

⁴⁴² '2520 voting in favour, and 9845 voting against.' "Untitled Item [the November Number of the Anti-Suffrage Review]," *The Spectator*, Nov 12, 1910.

⁴⁴³ Jo Rowlands, "Empowerment Examined," *Development in Practice* 5, no. 2 (1995): 102.

⁴⁴⁴ "Gender Equality Index 2019: United Kingdom, October 2019," European Institute for Gender Equality, accessed November 19, 2020, <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-equality-index-2019-united-kingdom>.

education post-secondary school, a higher proportion of jobs went to men and women were over three times as likely to work part time.⁴⁴⁵ Women who do work earn on average 24% less than men and in couples with children the gender pay gap increases to 41%.⁴⁴⁶ This is linked to the fact that women consistently take on more labour in the home including cooking, cleaning, caring for family members and educating children.⁴⁴⁷ Lower levels of educational attainment, singleness and single parenthood put women most at risk of living in poverty, and this risk persists into retirement where the gender pension gap is 36%.⁴⁴⁸ The biggest gender inequalities in Britain are in the category entitled 'power' (although of course, questions of income, etc, all include issues of power even if it is not explicitly stated). At the time this research was conducted women had increased their share of political and economic power but still only made up 29% of parliamentarians and board members of the largest publicly listed companies.⁴⁴⁹ In terms of social power women make up less than a third of board members in broadcasting, sports and research-funding.⁴⁵⁰

Britain continues to be a place in which women struggle to participate in all areas of public as men do, or with similar levels of influence. However the multiplicity of class, gender and race inequality complicates the picture. For women of UK minority heritage, the matters of gender, race and class are multiplied in what Kimberlé Crenshaw speaks of as the 'intersectionality' of injustice.⁴⁵¹ The experiences of such women are made invisible as Hazel

⁴⁴⁵ "Gender Equality Index 2019," 2.

⁴⁴⁶ "Gender Equality Index 2019," 2.

⁴⁴⁷ "Gender Equality Index 2019," 3.

⁴⁴⁸ "Gender Equality Index 2019," 2.

⁴⁴⁹ "Gender Equality Index 2019," 3.

⁴⁵⁰ "Gender Equality Index 2019," 3.

⁴⁵¹ Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1:8, (1989): 139-167; Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241-299.

V. Carby explains, if we imagine that gender, class and race are simply parallel issues.⁴⁵² On the contrary, we must bear in mind when discussing gender, that all women do not experience their gender in the same way, because of the privilege of whiteness which protects white women from the additional burdens of racism. Black and Asian women in Britain thus face the intersectional challenge of whiteness and patriarchy in the workplace and society as scholars have shown.⁴⁵³ Nor do all men experience the benefits of patriarchy in the same way, as black men are not only denied the benefits of white patriarchy but also victimised by it.⁴⁵⁴ The whiteness of white women is recognised as having offered them historic power over black men in some instances historically and even in the present.⁴⁵⁵

This data suggests that British society continues to remain unprepared for all women to be full participants in public life, as opposed to being those whose main place of occupation is in the home. It is at the point of working life, salaries and positions of power, that women are being dealt the most significant blows in terms of their socio-economic status, which then dictates the quality of their life in terms of health, housing and their families' wellbeing. It is also in these areas of labour (particularly unpaid labour) and power, that women face the most significant disadvantages in British pentecostal churches.

⁴⁵² Hazel V. Carby, "White Women Listen! Black feminism and the boundaries of sisterhood," in *The Empire Strikes Back. Race and Racism in 70s Britain*, ed, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (London: Hutchinson, 1982) 212.

⁴⁵³ M. Tariq and J. Syed, "Intersectionality at Work: South Asian Muslim Women's Experiences of Employment and Leadership in the United Kingdom," *Sex Roles* 77, (2017): 510–522; Lisa Amanda Palmer, "Diane Abbott, Misogynoir and the Politics of Black British Feminism's Anticolonial Imperatives: 'In Britain Too, It's as If We Don't Exist,'" *The Sociological Review* 68, no. 3 (May 2020): 508–23.

⁴⁵⁴ Carby, "White Women Listen!," 212, 214–215; Tommy J. Curry, "Decolonizing the Intersection: Black Male Studies as a Critique of Intersectionality's Indebtedness to Subculture of Violence Theory," in *Critical Psychology Praxis: Psychosocial Non-Alignment to Modernity/Coloniality*, edited by Robert K. Beshara (London: Routledge, 2021) 132–158.

⁴⁵⁵ Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar, "Challenging Imperial Feminism," *Feminist Review* 17 (Autumn 1984): 14.

4.2.3.3 Gender and Classical British Pentecostalism

In the context of classical pentecostalism, women experience much of the similar inequalities as in wider British society in the areas of work (particularly unpaid labour) and power. However, they also face the additional burden due to the fact that these inequalities are legitimised by biblical interpretations which support the exclusion of women from particular roles. The absence of women in the leadership of denominations at international and national levels is stark. The inequality between men and women's leadership should be even more striking when we remember that across the board, women have historically and continue to comprise the overwhelming majority of pentecostal church members.⁴⁵⁶ If we look once again at the international level we see that COG's International leadership team including its executive council, are all men.⁴⁵⁷ The same is true of COGOP, which has a racially diverse but entirely male executive team.⁴⁵⁸ When we take a look at the national level the picture is very much the same. The leadership team of the NTCG in Britain comprises twelve men, and COGIC is led by one 'jurisdictional bishop' with no other mention of a team.⁴⁵⁹ COGOP UK and AOG in Britain both have one woman on their national leadership teams.⁴⁶⁰

At a local congregation level ordained leadership is still mostly held by men, with some wives serving as senior leaders without having been ordained. Women are given space are given room to preach and lead services in many congregations, although often far below

⁴⁵⁶ Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 225; Foster, "The Inverted Pyramid," 49.

⁴⁵⁷ "Leadership," Church of God, accessed November 18, 2020, <http://www.churchofgod.org/leadership>

⁴⁵⁸ "Inspirational Leadership," Church of God of Prophecy, accessed November 18, 2020, <https://cogop.org/inspirational-leadership/>

⁴⁵⁹ "Leadership and Staff," New Testament Church of God, accessed November 18, 2020, <https://ntcg.org.uk/about/leadership/>; "Church of God in Christ UK," Church of God in Christ UK, accessed November 19, 2020 <http://www.cogic.org.uk/?q=node/3>.

⁴⁶⁰ "Team," Assemblies of God GB, accessed November 19, 2020, <https://www.aog.org.uk/aog-team>; "Overseers," Church of God of Prophecy UK, accessed November 19, 2020, <https://cogop.org.uk/overseers/>

the rate of men. In the three congregations which I have analysed in this research 13% of sermons across a year were delivered by various women at one church, and at two others, the rates were lower at 9% and 5%. In the two churches with the lowest rates of women preachers, the only woman who preached was the wife of the senior male leader. We will engage in a deeper analysis of the questions of power and gender in the next chapter, but for now it suffices to say that the position of women has not progressed overall within classical pentecostalism in Britain. If we measure the inclusion of women by how many women are in leadership in their own right (as ordained women, as single women leaders or as women who lead without their husbands) the evidence suggests that there is a long way to go. Women's access to leadership follows the same path as the earliest days in which Jenny Seymour rises to the highest level of leadership as the wife of William Seymour while other women are prohibited from governance structures.⁴⁶¹ In general, women are excluded from the 'priestly' role except when they lead in partnership with their ordained husbands.⁴⁶²

3.3.4. Summary

The matter of gender inclusivity will feature significantly in the following chapters which will focus specifically on the socially and politically progressive elements of classical British pentecostalism. At this stage, I want simply to acknowledge that continuing tensions for women within pentecostalism which are consistent and in some ways more contentious in the church than in wider society. The theology which underpins discrimination against

⁴⁶¹ Nelson, "For Such a Time as This" 44; Seymour, *Doctrines and Disciplines*, 35; Stephenson, "Prophesying Women and Ruling Men," 414.

⁴⁶² Stephenson, "Prophesying Women and Ruling Men," 416-9.

women is not easily challenged even for those who consider themselves progressive and concerned about the matters of justice and equality.

4.3 Conclusion

In the first part of this chapter we focussed on the historical development of early British pentecostalism. Overall, we saw a continuation with classical pentecostalism at Azusa Street and globally, which has thrived among those belonging to socio-economic groups, including migrants. We also observed that the various contributing tributaries to British pentecostalism, were characterised by the pneumatic dualism in which revivals and encounter with the Holy Spirit were limited to the spiritual and religious, with the potential for indirect social consequences. The pneumatic integralism in which the Spirit is encountered in holistic transformation of political and public life was generally absent although hinted at as possible, in certain cases. In the second part of this chapter we turned to an analysis of contemporary classical pentecostalism within its socio-economic context. We discussed current class, race and gender inequalities in Britain as the result of historic capitalist, colonial and patriarchal philosophies and norms. We acknowledged the social mobility of some pentecostals within this system, but also the temptations to be complicit with the values of neoliberal capitalism. In terms of race and gender, we recognised that pentecostal churches are often consistent with wider inequalities, although there are signs that progress may be occurring to some extent.

We have laid a foundation in this chapter for an understanding of classical pentecostalism in Britain, in terms of its historical development, and its propensity towards pneumatic dualism. We have also shown the context in which it has developed, and its propensity to leave unequal racial and gender power dynamics intact. We will now turn in the next chapter to define and analyse the 'progressive' stream within classical British

pentecostalism. It is the progressive pentecostals who best embody a pneumatic integralism in regard to public theology, in that they are concerned for the matters of public life. They represent a break away from the majority who are content with the personal revivals that have occurred historically in Britain. However, they also wrestle to various extents with the same pneumatic dualism in regard to anthropology, which undermines holistic understandings of discipleship and thus political action.

5 PROGRESSIVE PENTECOSTALISM: THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS

In the previous chapters we noted the various spiritual and theological traditions, individual people, ethnic groups and socio-economic and political trends which have shaped classical pentecostalism in Britain. We have seen that classical pentecostalism though described as one tradition, is fraught by tensions and marked by distinct perspectives and emphases.⁴⁶³ We have labelled the major distinction within classical pentecostalism, as pneumatic dualism versus pneumatic integralism. Now that we have exposed the problem of classical pentecostalism, we will focus specifically on the nature of pneumatic integralism within contemporary pentecostalism in Britain. This is in order that we might in the rest of this thesis give our full focus to our main concern, which is the integration of pneumatic anthropology, being pentecostal belief and ethical expectation regarding the Spirit's presence and work within the human person and community. In order to examine this theme, we will focus our attention on an even narrower stream within classical pentecostalism; those with a 'progressive' orientation. It is within this progressive stream, that we find the pentecostal thought and practice which best imbibes a pneumatic integralism. However, there are still limitations even in this stream, to the full integration of all aspects of embodiment (and more importantly body politics) into spirituality and theological reflection.

In this chapter we will begin by drawing Miller and Yamamori's use of the term 'progressive' into dialogue with British pentecostal scholars, in order to clarify how progressivism might be understood in the British context. I will then leave the bulk of this chapter for presenting the theological frameworks which are core for progressive classical

⁴⁶³ 'Classical' will be used during this chapter and for the rest of this thesis to refer collectively to classical British Pentecostalism including its American roots and counterparts without specifying 'British' or 'American'.

pentecostals who are seeking to serve those who are living in poverty and socio-economically disadvantaged (including women and people of colour). The theological foundations for progressive pentecostal action were not always named explicitly by interviewees but could be detected through the emphases within particular stories and the reasoning behind certain actions. I am not presenting the leaders as representatives of all progressive pentecostals across the board, but rather as examples.

We will begin by examining the person of Jesus as a teacher as well as saviour, in the matter of social engagement. We will then consider ecclesiology arguing that progressives blur the church-world dualism in how they understand themselves in relation to the world, and for the sake of hospitality and mission. In the subsequent section we will consider mission as public and socially transformative in progressive imagination. We will end with a presentation of progressive pentecostalism's this-worldly eschatology in which signs of the kingdom are expected in the here and now, in social and political ways.

5.1 What is Progressive Pentecostalism?

The term 'progressive pentecostalism' is used by Miller and Yamamori to describe pentecostals whose community engagement is a core element of their ministry. For Miller and Yamamori, pentecostals who are oriented towards progressivism embrace an 'integral/holistic gospel' and are committed to a range of activities which serve the 'felt needs' of those in their communities beyond the church. At one end of the spectrum are 'humanitarian responses to human need' and at the other are projects which focus on 'community development.'⁴⁶⁴ However, the progressive pentecostals Miller and Yamamori describe, do not for the most part seek to impact policy or engage in political organisation

⁴⁶⁴ Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 213.

as a route to dealing with the problems of the poor and needy in their communities.⁴⁶⁵

Miller and Yamamori contrast the 'progressive' orientation with those who may be concerned primarily with personal piety (what they label legalism), health and wealth theology (prosperity gospel) or adaptations to contemporary culture (routinism).⁴⁶⁶ While we have already seen that pentecostals in Britain can in fact incorporate various orientations at once (for example progressive and prosperity),⁴⁶⁷ Miller and Yamamori's framework is helpful for considering the various possible emphases for pentecostal congregations or denominations. In highlighting the progressive orientation, they dispel the myth that pentecostals are not concerned about human life in a holistic sense. In other words, they demonstrate a propensity towards pneumatic integralism, in which the signs of encounter with the Spirit, extend beyond the religious, to encompass social relationships and action.

Nevertheless, we will see that we cannot conflate Miller and Yamamori's 'progressive' orientation entirely with the 'pneumatic integralism' in its fullest sense. The pneumatic integralism we have explored in relation to theological anthropology is forged out of particular attentiveness to the body in its classed, racialised and gendered aspects both in the church and wider world. It is the Spirit's empowerment of all aspects of the person, not just the religious, disembodied and individualised self, that distinguishes pneumatic integralism from pneumatic dualism. While social inequality - and poverty in particular - is the core issue addressed in the cases of the progressive pentecostalism that Miller and Yamamori explore, the wider aspects of embodiment such as race and gender are not dealt

⁴⁶⁵ Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 41-2, 213.

⁴⁶⁶ Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 28-31.

⁴⁶⁷ Richard Burgess, "African Pentecostal spirituality, 258; Davies and Cartledge, "A Megachurch in a Megacity," 68-9, 70-3.

with. In this sense, the wrestle between pneumatic dualism and integralism continues in regard to the human person and the community, despite the progressive orientation.

Miller and Yamamori recognise the limitations of labelling these pentecostals 'progressive' due mainly to their concern that the pentecostals they studied were not sufficiently political to be designated such a title.⁴⁶⁸ Amos Yong also speaks of progressivism in terms of activism, liberationism and social engagement, while recognising that pentecostals 'remain less likely to want to confront the government' or 'engage in radical acts of civil disobedience.'⁴⁶⁹ The question of what counts as 'progressive' also needs to be interrogated in dialogue with British scholarship, especially as Miller and Yamamori are addressing pentecostalism in the 'global south'. As we already seen, British scholars have discussed the social and political engagement of classical pentecostals in Britain, although without the 'progressive' language of Miller and Yamamori. Valentina Alexander, Joe Aldred, Robert Beckford, and David Muir in particular, have often lamented that while black pentecostal churches have historically been bastions of social power for black communities, they have not been sufficiently involved in political organisation.⁴⁷⁰ As in the case of Miller and Yamamori's progressives of the global south, many pentecostal churches in Britain focus on the social over the political, effectively doing the long-term and often exhausting work of 'putting bandages on problems' rather than thinking structurally about social issues.⁴⁷¹ Having said this, classical pentecostals are becoming increasingly aware of the need for political organisation and some have made clear strides towards this.⁴⁷² As we will see in our

⁴⁶⁸ Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 212.

⁴⁶⁹ Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 34, 37.

⁴⁷⁰ Alexander, "Breaking every fetter?" 115, 296; Aldred, *Thinking Outside the Box*, 70-73; Beckford, *Dread and Pentecostal*, 56, 61, 62, 174-176; Muir, "Pentecostals and Political Engagement," 204.

⁴⁷¹ Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 213.

⁴⁷² Muir, "Pentecostals and Political Engagement," 207-11.

analysis, progressive pentecostals in Britain are increasingly political in ways that Miller and Yamamori did not witness in their research in the global south. Classical pentecostals who share a progressive orientation in Britain are impacting government policy and leading nationally recognised institutions that are positively changing systems and structures for the sake of the vulnerable across cities, regions and even the country.

Despite their concern that their examples of progressivism may fall short for those who define progressivism as political organising, Miller and Yamamori justify their use of 'progressive' because they consider these pentecostals to have shifted away from earlier pentecostals who they describe as 'quite sectarian, fleeing any real engagement with the world except for the purpose of proselytizing.'⁴⁷³ While this reading of early pentecostalism may be true for the majority, we have seen that this was not the rule for all. Whether we look to the COG service in which the congregation was moved by the Spirit to donate money to an orphanage, or the COGIC missionaries concerned with community development and uplift, we find that a social conscience was present among early pentecostals.⁴⁷⁴ In using 'progressive', we run the risk of returning to the common narrative espoused here by Miller and Yamamori, that all pentecostals have always been disengaged socially and politically. It is important to clarify therefore, that while we will use 'progressive' for lack of a more accurate term, we are not suggesting that any social and political elements of pentecostal thought and practice are new, and a sign of movement away from one early identity to another. Instead, I would seek to do justice to the story of classical pentecostalism by reading this 'progressive' orientation as a continuation and expansion of their heritage and a recapturing of what was lost in its earliest days. We will see as we go through this chapter that

⁴⁷³ Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 212.

⁴⁷⁴ Conn, *Like a Mighty Army*, 153, 325; White, *The Rise to Respectability*, 81.

progressive pentecostalism today, exhibits signs of continuity and discontinuity with early classical pentecostalism. Progressive pentecostals in contemporary Britain have not rejected wholesale the heritage of Azusa Street and the Welsh revival in order to ‘progress’ onwards. The contemporary progressive classical pentecostalism I will present in this chapter draws on past heritage, attends to the present and imagines the future of the world not just the church.⁴⁷⁵

5.2 Progressive Pentecostalism: Theological Frameworks

We have named and described progressive pentecostalism above, as an orientation that recognises a holistic Gospel into which the community’s social and political life is drawn, as well as the personal religious life. The outworking of this progressivism is seen in a myriad of activities which respond to social needs, through immediate interventions at the grassroots, but also through engagement in political structures and the systems which bring about those social needs. In the rest of this chapter, I want to look underneath these activities in order to highlight the theological perspectives, which underpin the shift towards progressivism. Scholars have argued that classical pentecostal theology is formed of four of five core emphases: justification by faith in Christ, sanctification, baptism in the Spirit, healing of the body and the pre-millennial return of Christ.⁴⁷⁶ However, as we have already seen, classical pentecostalism involves a myriad of cultural forms, perspectives and theological emphases. Therefore, while we might find this useful as a framework we should - as Yong suggests - be mindful of its limitations in terms of its capacity to speak for all classical pentecostals, and its nature as a western construct.⁴⁷⁷ In this chapter, I will

⁴⁷⁵ Hereafter, ‘progressives,’ ‘progressivism,’ and ‘progressive pentecostalism’ should all be understood to describe the orientation within the classical pentecostalism stream, although I will not state this explicitly as ‘progressive classical pentecostalism.’

⁴⁷⁶ Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 18; Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 19-23.

⁴⁷⁷ Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 95-6.

demonstrate that progressive pentecostals exhibit both continuity and discontinuity with the theological emphases considered to be distinctive for classical pentecostals. We will see primarily that while Jesus is recognised overall as saviour, he is also known as *teacher* because of an increasing emphasis on Jesus as a historic, public figure as well as on the cosmic Christ. Secondly, we will observe that the realist instincts of progressive pentecostals bring ecclesiology to the fore, through a willingness to acknowledge the blurring of sacred-secular, church-world dualisms. Thirdly, we will consider the holistic understanding of mission, which motivates a commitment to both the articulation of the Gospel message and its demonstration through service. Finally, we will see that eschatology remains important, though there is a shift away from the focus on the pre-millennial return of Jesus, to a participation in, and anticipation of the Kingdom of God.

5.2.1 Jesus, Salvation and Discipleship

As is true for pentecostals and Christians more broadly, faith in Jesus is believed to lead a person to eternal life, even while in the midst of a world which is deformed by sin and death. Salvation is often individualised in classical pentecostal imagination as we have seen, even if social and political impact might take place on the basis of those individuals entering into public life as ‘new creations.’ However for progressives, salvation is understood in more holistic ways (as social, political as well as religious) because the saviour Jesus is recognised as a public figure in his context as well as a religious leader. As progressive pentecostals grow in their understanding of Jesus as a *public* saviour, so their expectations of salvation and discipleship expand to embrace social, political and public life.

At the forefront of the minds of interviewees was the concern that Jesus has been misrepresented by some within the church. This was particularly strong for those leaders

whose community ministries were conducted outside of church structures, sometimes due to concerns about control by church leaders or lack of support. Leaders who were converts to pentecostal Christianity and thus had come into the church from the outside, they were fluent in all the reasons why the church is off-putting to the unchurched. The barriers were not to do with Jesus, but due to what they see as the church's misrepresentation of Jesus and the Christian faith broadly, as Rev Robin Thompson described:

'I knew God was real but God's people, his ambassadors put me off. I used to pray every night, sometimes Psalm 23 or other Psalms, the Lord's prayer or just talking. There was a particular moment when God started to draw me to questions life, to ask if there is a God and if there is where are you? I'm reading this Bible with Christ standing up for the poor, dealing with the poor, healing, and a revolution but I'm not seeing it in his vehicle – so that did something to me. I went into the back of the church in desperate need, looking for a deeper sense of purpose...'⁴⁷⁸

The 'ambassadors' Rev Thompson speaks of here, are Christians called to represent Christ in the world, and the 'vehicle' was a reference to church tasked with spreading the Gospel. Jesus is recognised as the one who had saved those I had interviewed, from difficult pasts (often in miraculous ways) and they saw him as present with them on the margins rather than being confined to the church with its internal politics and neglect of the poor. In several interviews with senior leaders who had converted to pentecostal Christianity, correcting misrepresentations of Jesus was an underlying concern for them in their ministry.⁴⁷⁹ They correction was not done through teaching doctrinal statements about the person of Jesus but through embodying the ministry of Jesus as revealed through the scriptures by the power of the Spirit. It is Jesus the liberator whom they have encountered and discovered - or

⁴⁷⁸ Interview, Rev Robin Thompson, July 2019.

⁴⁷⁹ Interview, Pastor Dez Brown, February 2019; Interview, Rev Robin Thompson, July 2019; Interview, Rev Dr Carver Anderson, July 2019.

indeed, he who has encountered and discovered them - and it is he they seek to serve and witness to in the world.⁴⁸⁰

A significant part of this witness depends upon the ability to imagine Jesus as one who walked and talked in a real place, time and context, and is now living and present by the Holy Spirit to teach believers how to be and what to do. Jesus is recognised as transcendent and imminent, both there (in eternity) and here (in this community at this time) as saviour, sanctifier, spirit-baptiser, healer, coming king and *teacher*.⁴⁸¹ What Jesus is understood to do, say and value in his public ministry offers a framework for believers to learn how they might live. Recognising Jesus as one who spent his time 'in the community, not just in the synagogue', who was 'with the marginalised' and as one who 'enriched' people through conversation, promotes a particular ethic in relation to power.⁴⁸² Rather than remaining with the religious elite and distanced from the people, Jesus is imagined as one who was present among everyday people in the community. By describing Jesus in this way, progressive pentecostals can see him as one who embraced his social context, listening and speaking to those he encountered, and is thus as someone who is present in their own contexts today. Faith in this embodied saviour, who sat (and sits by his Spirit today) among the everyday people as opposed to the powerful, opens up pentecostal imaginations about God and God's ways with the world. By extension this results in a broadening of discipleship and vocation, for those disciples who follow in the example of their saviour-teacher.

⁴⁸⁰ Rev Anderson spoke directly about 'liberation' in his interview but this was not a common theme even though the principles of justice and addressing structural issues were spoken about implicitly.

⁴⁸¹ While Pentecostal theology centres the fivefold framework, the ministry of Jesus as teacher tends to be overlooked, despite Jesus's rabbinic ministry in the scriptures. The Spirit of Truth is spoken of as a guide at teacher at times, however, the teaching role of Jesus, deserves further attention not only in the historic sense, but also in relation to believers today on the path of discipleship.

⁴⁸² Interview, Rev Dr Carver Anderson, July 2019.

Obedience to Christ continues to form the basis for the faith and witness of progressives. Understood as the 'word made flesh', Jesus is not only saviour, sanctifier, spirit baptiser, healer and coming king, but *teacher* in the matters of social and political engagement. It is in the teaching ministry of Jesus, experienced through his Spirit of truth who is present with believers, that his disciples are able to both rightly discern who he is, and see the necessary steps to follow his example. Salvation continues to be a matter of 'praxis' as Vondey rightfully explains, and for progressives Jesus is the one who models and teaches this praxis as public, social and political saviour.⁴⁸³ For some, Jesus is stated as the reason for their social ministry through his presence and command. For example, the housing charity *Green Pastures* states directly 'the reason we house the homeless is Jesus'⁴⁸⁴. They go on to recognise both the presence of Christ in them 'the hope of glory', and the biblical imperative to house the homeless and care for the needy. For others, it is the nature of Jesus not just his commands which undergirds their social ministry. Rev Dr Anderson explained that *Bringing Hope* seeks to 'represent the character of Jesus Christ' which amounts in his mind to 'manifesting goodness, truth, justice, care, love and compassion.'⁴⁸⁵ While this revelation of Jesus undoubtedly leads *Bringing Hope* to action, what is interesting here is the emphasis on Jesus' character not just his actions. Jesus then, teaches believers how to *be*, not just what to *do*.

It is this need to learn how to *be* social, political and public, that demands attentiveness to Jesus' character, actions and commands as *Green Pastures* and *Bringing Hope* attest to. But it also seems that understanding how to *be* social and political beings,

⁴⁸³ Wolfgang Vondey, "Soteriology at the Altar: Pentecostal Contributions to Salvation as Praxis," *Transformation* 34, no. 3 (July 2017): 231-2.

⁴⁸⁴ "About," *Green Pastures*, Accessed November 27, 2020 <https://www.greenpastures.net/about>.

⁴⁸⁵ Interview, Rev Dr Carver Anderson, July 2019.

also demands attentiveness to the *embodiment* of Jesus. This was one element of Jesus which was not discussed, probably because it was taken for granted. Yet attending to the embodiment of Jesus would go beyond simply recognising that Jesus engaged socially and politically, or that he was compassionate and concerned with the matters of justice. Attentiveness to Jesus means recognising the significance of his actual *body*; the socio-economic, ethnic and cultural identities which allowed him to share the experiences of the oppressed throughout all of human history. As Howard Thurman describes:

‘The economic predicament with which he was identified at birth placed him initially with the great mass of men on the earth. The masses of the people are poor. If we dare take the position that in Jesus there was at work some radical destiny, it would be safe to say that in his poverty he was more truly the Son of men, than he would have been if the incident of family or birth had made him a rich son of Israel.’⁴⁸⁶

I am suggesting that by being attentive to Jesus who was God in a classed, gendered and racialised body, progressive pentecostals might be inspired to attend to their own embodiment and the embodiment of others in deeper ways. In turn, this attentiveness to embodiment, may lead to more deeply considered ethical conclusions regarding what it means to follow this Jesus, embodied as he was, as believers, embodied as they are, serving the community made up of people embodied in a myriad of ways. The importance of Jesus for pentecostal ethics is not simply in what Jesus teaches believers to *do*, but in how he teaches believers to *be*. Jesus’ being - and thus all human being - depends upon the recognition and embrace of embodiment (both his own and that of others). This recognition of embodiment, includes attending to the matters of power as related to embodiment, seen in Jesus’ ability to see and name the ‘least of these.’⁴⁸⁷ Progressive pentecostals are able to

⁴⁸⁶ Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976) 7.

⁴⁸⁷ Matthew 25:40.

name some of these groups (normally the socio-economically disadvantaged, sometimes the racially oppressed) but not all of them (often women and sexual/gender minorities). This is, I want to suggest here, its due in part to a lack of attentiveness to embodiment and particularly to the matters of power and disempowerment as they relate to the full range of human embodied expressions. Yet in the same way that attending to Jesus as a historic and public figure has inspired more radical public engagement, I will suggest that attending to the body of Jesus, and the ways in which his body is oppressed, may inspire more radical approaches to community and inclusion. I will make this argument in detail in chapter 7.

5.2.2 Church-World: Blurring Dualisms, Challenging Evil

If Jesus is recognised as saviour-teacher by progressive pentecostals, then the church is the gathered community of those who are saved and those who are being taught. Within the classical pentecostal tradition, we have seen that the lines between ‘church’ and ‘world’, the ‘saints’ and the ‘sinners’ were made explicit in doctrine, theology and through certain moral practices. However, we might also state that despite the clarity of the dividing line in theory, the distinctions between the ‘holy’ and the ‘heathen’ were often much harder to detect in practice. The mystery of the church’s nature involves a tension between the *reality* of what the church embodies and enacts (or fails to embody and act) in the world, and the *truth* of who she is through the salvific work of Christ. So while it is *true* that the church - as ‘redeemed’ and ‘inspired’ humanity - is called to be the ‘visible icon of the Trinity’⁴⁸⁸ in creation, in *reality* it often struggles to resist conforming to the ‘patterns of this world’ (Romans 12:2). For this reason, the church-world dualism, while conveying theological *truth* about the church’s nature as distinct from the world, is flawed because it fails to engage

⁴⁸⁸ Augustine, *The Spirit and the Common Good*, 15.

with the *reality* of the church's sinfulness as it is present in and formed by the world.⁴⁸⁹ Luke Bretherton describes this as the struggle between the 'binary' and 'dyadic' aspects of the church-world dualism:

'Paradoxically, attempts to separate the church from the world (because it is judged polluting or demonic) end up revalorising sinful and idolatrous patterns of life, whereas when pentecostals form a life with non-pentecostal others, they radically resignify and reorientate the earthly city (I.e. Sinful and idolatrous patterns of life) toward Christ through the power of the Spirit. Pentecostalism thereby displays, both positively and negatively, how the duality of the church-world relation is dyadic (both/and), not binary (either/or) ...As in the dyads left/right or up/down, each term makes no sense without the other. Each is both constitutive of and regulative of the other.'⁴⁹⁰

Some classical pentecostals exhibit this 'binary' understanding of the church-world relationship by seeking to be separate from the world socially, and effectively attempting to be the church without the world (akin to being up without the down). These would be described as relating to the 'otherworldly' orientation described by Miller and Yamamori.⁴⁹¹ However, our interest in the 'progressive' stream within pentecostalism, makes the 'dyadic' model relevant for our discussion. This dyadic model suggests that the church and the 'world' need each other in a relationship which involves both constitution and regulation. However, I would say that progressives recognise that it is not simply the case that the church needs the world in order to understand itself, but that the church is indelibly formed by the world. If classical pentecostals in general have historically felt a tension between 'a cleansing *from* and a consecration *for* the world,' progressives do not seem to share this struggle in the same way.⁴⁹² While progressives understand that the church exists in some ways as distinct from the world, they also see that it is not entirely distinct in reality; the

⁴⁸⁹ For a discussion of this tension within the wider Christian tradition see Michael Mawson, "The Spirit and the Community," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 15 (2013): 453-468.

⁴⁹⁰ Luke Bretherton, *Christ and the Common Life* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020) 120.

⁴⁹¹ Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 28-9.

⁴⁹² Yong, *In the Days*, 190.

church contains her own kinds of worldliness. This was captured in the ease with which progressive pentecostals critique the church's emphases, practices and priorities, sometimes suggesting the church is in some ways less relevant than secular or non-Christian groups. As one interviewee with a history of criminal activity stated boldly regarding the various Christian traditions and denominations to which believers subscribe: 'I think the churches are the biggest gangs in the world.'⁴⁹³ It is the historic failure of the church to live up to the ethical standards presented in the scriptures, that has undermined the church-world dualism which characterises classical pentecostalism. Equally, the experience of goodness within the 'world', particularly before conversion to pentecostalism and sometimes in contrast to the church, further challenges the binary in which the church is believed to be fundamentally good, and the 'world', bad.⁴⁹⁴ Ultimately, progressives recognise that 'it is not given to the church to define its relationship to the world. Rather the primary agent in any such determination is the Spirit.'⁴⁹⁵

For this reason, progressive pentecostals are driven less by the legalism which is concerned primarily with determining who is 'in' and 'out'; there is a willingness to admit that the lines are not so clear. In their own testimonies of conversion, several of the interviewees spoke openly about their past lives, their encounters with God and their ongoing struggles without shame.⁴⁹⁶ Their willingness to accept and tell their true stories, allowed them to connect with those who also did not fit in to churches whose concern for 'cleansing from' made them hostile to those still viewed as 'unclean'.⁴⁹⁷ While for classical

⁴⁹³ Interview, Rev Robin Thompson, July 2019.

⁴⁹⁴ Rev Robin Thompson reflected on his relationships as a Christian leader, stating "I've never fit into the church, I have more loyal friends back on the streets than in the church," Interview, July 2019.

⁴⁹⁵ Bretherton, *Christ and the Common Life*, 157.

⁴⁹⁶ Interview, Pastor Dez Brown, February 2019; Interview, Rev Dr Carver Anderson, July 2019; Interview, Rev Robin Thompson, July 2019.

⁴⁹⁷ Yong, *In the Days*, 190.

pentecostals, the Holiness emphasis has overall been focussed on personal piety, for progressives, genuine faith is seen in works of love not just within the congregation but beyond. The church is identified by what she embodies in being *and* doing, not only because of particular truth claims, doctrinal commitments or even spirituality. Progressives are in effect, drawing on the heritage of their Wesleyan-Holiness predecessors whose holiness was social, political and public as well as religious and personal. In critiquing the disengaged classical pentecostalism of his youth, Rev Thompson explains:

‘So it was come to church on Sunday, dress and look good, clap hands, be in the spirit, speak in tongues, the preacher preaches with his handkerchief sweating, lots of emotion but totally disconnected from what we, their children were going through...most of the churches in the urban inner-city area kicked me out, they said I was mad because I was going in saying they were irrelevant and they didn’t understand what was going on with us out here and they looked down on us.’⁴⁹⁸

We have seen that for some classical pentecostals, the church’s concern to defend its distinct identity in contrast to the world or the ‘unsaved’ has led to sectarianism in various forms. However for progressives, a concern for social transformation empowered by the Holy Spirit has overtaken self-preservation as the core driver in the church-world ‘dyadic’ relationship. For progressive pentecostals, the church should not simply be a place of religious and individual encounter with God, but a place of empowerment to *see* what is happening in the world and then to act. Being a collective of sanctified, spirit-baptised disciples of Jesus, means that the church is formed as a gift to the world and particularly to those marginalised members of society through its ministry of public action. Progressive pentecostals acknowledge that those who belong to the church are simultaneously present in the world, are affected by it and have a stake in it. There is therefore a more direct

⁴⁹⁸ Interview, Rev Robin Thompson, July 2019.

interplay between ‘secular contexts and spiritual commitments’⁴⁹⁹ (though the secular is not completely godless nor the spiritual apolitical, in their minds). Progressives are deepening what it means to be neighbours and forging ahead with a more holistic understanding of church’s mission.

Despite the hopefulness and emboldened stance of the church vis-à-vis the world, for many, the relationship is in fact adversarial rather than simply ‘dyadic’ as Bretherton describes.⁵⁰⁰ During interviews at ECCi, participants commonly drew on militaristic images to describe their relationship with the wider world, speaking in terms of ‘invading secular space.’⁵⁰¹ Participants relayed a sense of ongoing struggle between good and evil, rather than adopting the triumphalistic understandings of Christ and the work of the Cross often attributed to pentecostalism.⁵⁰² While Satan and the forces of evil are undoubtedly defeated by Christ’s death and resurrection for progressives, the church continues to struggle against the manifestations of evil in the world through the power of Christ and the presence of the Spirit. As Rev Dr Anderson explained:

‘There are certain tangible outworkings of evil in our society - so the young men and young women that we have buried over the years, that is not about goodness, that's about some evil aspects. Now, when we read the biblical narratives, there is something about what it is to be living in a world that is evil, that is oppositional to the righteousness, truth, empowerment and the liberation, that God (Yeshua) speaks about or the coming of the Holy Spirit represents. Bringing Hope is saying we cannot negate the underlying issues that are rooted not in the physicality that you see, but in the unknown, or the unseen.’⁵⁰³

⁴⁹⁹ Tony Lee Richie, “Pragmatism, Power, and Politics: A Pentecostal Conversation with President Obama's Favourite Theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr,” *Pneuma* 32, no.2 (2010): 254-5.

⁵⁰⁰ Bretherton, *Christ and the Common Life*, 120.

⁵⁰¹ Interview, Pastor Anthony Hodgkinson, February 2019; Interview, Pastor Dez Brown, February 2019.

⁵⁰² David Courey, *What has Wittenberg to do with Azusa?: Luther's theology of the cross and pentecostal triumphalism* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015) 6-8.

⁵⁰³ Interview, Rev Dr Carver Anderson, July 2019.

In his description we find a consistency with what Walter Wink describes as the ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ aspects of the powers in society.⁵⁰⁴ Anderson along with many classical pentecostals would disagree with Wink’s summation that the demonic is *primarily* encountered within institutions and that these powers do not have a ‘separate, spiritual existence’.⁵⁰⁵ However, Anderson indicates that progressive pentecostals would agree with the notion that the demonic *can be* and in fact *is* encountered as the power of systems, institutions or social realities. On the one hand there is the recognition in Anderson’s words, of what Yong describes as ‘pentecostal deliverance; in which spiritual warfare is required to overthrow the satanic powers manifesting in social evil.’⁵⁰⁶ Yet on the other hand, progressive pentecostalism, exemplified here by Anderson, is not focussed exclusively on the demonic powers (mythologically understood) as the sources of social evils. This kind of mythological reading of the demonic powers, may by extension to the assumption that spiritual warfare is the only necessary or effective response to social issues. Instead, Anderson demonstrates an *integrated* consciousness in which he identifies the social and political sources of the violence and death he and his colleagues witness as well as unseen spiritual aspects of those realities. In the case of *Bringing Hope*, this integrated perspective generates a multifaceted response to social issues. *Bringing Hope* does indeed commit to prayer, but prayer acts as the foundation which undergirds their work to rectify the social and political trends which are impacting the vulnerable people they serve. There is an indication here of the integral African worldview which is able to see public life through spiritual as well as social and

⁵⁰⁴ Walter Wink, *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984) 104-6.

⁵⁰⁵ Wink, *Naming the Powers*, 105.

⁵⁰⁶ Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 126; Bryant L. Myers, “Progressive Pentecostalism, Development, and Christian Development NGOs: A Challenge and an Opportunity,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 39, no. 3 (2015): 116.

political lenses. It is also clear that the idea of evil or sin, being social and political, not purely personal, imbibes the elements within the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition that embraced a social holiness commitment. Sin, evil and therefore goodness and righteousness extend beyond the individual, to have structural and systemic elements.

5.2.3 Mission and Social Transformation

Eldin Villafañe speaks of the 'politics of the spirit' stating that 'the Holy Spirit has a political agenda for God's creation.'⁵⁰⁷ This rings true for progressives in England who recognise the wider life of the polis as space for the move of the Spirit and the action of the church in the power of that same Spirit. As we have seen, progressive soteriology still recognises individual conversion as essential to salvation, even if, as we have seen, 'unsaved' people may experience God's goodness through the ministry of the church. Jesus' command to his disciples to 'go and make disciples of all nations,' is seen as a timeless instruction to believers making evangelism crucial to Christian mission today.⁵⁰⁸ However, for progressives, mission involves more than preaching a sermon aimed at the conversion of individuals to faith in Christ. Mission includes evangelism but also encompasses all activities, events or strategies which orient people towards encounter with God. Rather than pitting evangelism against social or political engagement as has done by some classical pentecostals (as well as Christians in other traditions) the two are interweaved.⁵⁰⁹

Progressives in England recognise that in the matter of mission and evangelism, they must in fact 'earn the right to preach.'⁵¹⁰ Social and political engagement plays an apologetic

⁵⁰⁷ Eldin Villafañe, "The Politics of the Spirit: Reflections on a Theology of Social Transformation for the Twenty-First Century," *Pneuma* 18, no. 1 (1996): 162.

⁵⁰⁸ Matthew 28:19.

⁵⁰⁹ Jerry M. Ireland, "A Classical Pentecostal Approach to Discipleship in Missions," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 28, no. 2, (2019): 243-66.

⁵¹⁰ Interview, Pastor Anthony Hodgkinson, February 2019.

role, in which progressives demonstrate the genuineness and relevance of their faith in a context which is sceptical about organised religion and is post-Christian in some particular ways. They are committed to the process of relationship building with those outside of the community of faith. For some progressives, these relationships are built with the vulnerable people they work with in the community (often referred to as clients), where it is appropriate. The progressives I interviewed all shared a hope that that they may eventually have organic opportunities to share their faith with their clients. One interviewee was critical of the 'preach with actions' approach he had seen elsewhere in which Christians engage in social action without talking about Jesus explicitly or providing an opportunity for conversion. This approach of letting one's life speak, led to 'missed opportunities' in his words, in which the Christians did not get to articulate the Gospel and specifically share their experience of the transformative work of Jesus in their lives.⁵¹¹ However, though across the board progressives hoped to talk about their faith, this did not detract from them addressing the needs of their neighbours. They saw both explicit evangelism and acts of service as central to mission, as both were done in obedience to Christ and under the conviction of the Holy Spirit. The conviction of the Spirit moved these believers to preach and share the Gospel in words, but also to participate in public life for the sake of those in need.

In addition to the value placed on relationships and service, progressive pentecostal understanding of mission has shifted from a focus on geography to focus on spheres within a particular context. If the mission has been understood historically by pentecostals as departure from one geographical location to another, then for progressives it involves movement from the religious sphere into the wider 'secular' and pluralistic world.⁵¹² Going

⁵¹¹ Interview, David (pseudonym), February 2019.

⁵¹² Wariboko, *The Charismatic City*, 14.

into 'all the world' does not simply mean locations, but spaces within British society. They embody what Villafañe describes as the 'better understanding of the reign of God' in which 'the Spirit challenges (believers) to go beyond the church to embrace the total social order and its organizing institutions as legitimate arenas for a true and holistic Christian discipleship.'⁵¹³ For example, a core part of one church's mission strategy is focussed on small groups for people who work in various sectors of society which they call 'gateways', including business, media and entertainment, sports, healthcare, education, civic and family. The congregation seeks to develop individuals who will carry within them the values of their faith into these sectors where they work and have influence.

This individualised approach to impacting public life, is common among progressive pentecostals who, as Amos Yong has argued, are more comfortable with raising individual leaders who can engage with the world, than they are with confronting the powers through collective political organisation.⁵¹⁴ In the case of Emmanuel Community School (ECS), several teachers, the head teacher, director of education and various pastoral staff are all members of ECCi who felt a calling to education. Mrs Titilayo Oluwatudimu spoke about her 'ministry in the school' in which she teaches children with difficult backgrounds, develops their intellectual capacity and self-esteem and is able to 'direct (a) child according to (their) creator'.⁵¹⁵ This holistic understanding of education as a spiritual as well as intellectual or cognitive task has resonances of what we described as the African worldview. This would be understandable for Mrs Oluwatudimu who was raised in Nigeria and came to faith in a Christian school in Nigeria within a non-European cultural framework.⁵¹⁶ However, it is also

⁵¹³ Villafañe, *The Politics of the Spirit*, 162.

⁵¹⁴ See Amos Yong's description of three models of political engagement by pentecostals in Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 250-1.

⁵¹⁵ Interview, Mrs Titilayo Oluwatudimu, February 2019.

⁵¹⁶ Interview, Mrs Titilayo Oluwatudimu, February 2019.

the case, that as a Nigerian whose own faith-based education was so transformative for her own life, she seeks to take this holistic approach in her own work and ministry. In this sense Mrs Oluwatudimu can be recognised not only as an individual prophet raised up in the forum of the church,⁵¹⁷ but as prophet from Africa to Europe who brings an integrated approach to public ministry.⁵¹⁸

The broadening out of mission to include education (and not just Christian education) is underpinned not only by pragmatism in the face of social deprivation, but by a broader sense of the work of God in public life. Progressives recognise that the work of God is possible outside of the church's walls, and therefore ministry is not bound to the church building or the activities of the gathered church. We can see one example of this in ECS, which was founded by leaders in ECCi alongside others within the community. Several of their teachers began working in the children's ministry at the church, before eventually either training to be teachers at the school or transferring there from other schools.⁵¹⁹ The church eventually changed its name to match the school. This decision was for the leaders themselves, an indication that their intention and focus had shifted in an expansive way, to embrace ministry beyond the church and to even be led in their ministry, by the needs they were encountering.⁵²⁰ It is a sign of this kingdom over church focus, in Pastor Anthony's words:

'How arrogant to make it about church, because the church only exists as God's vehicle for his kingdom to the world...The big shift for pentecostal churches...less conversation about ecclesia and more conversation about basileia; what's the kingdom of God? How is God expressing his rule now? Is it just the church?'⁵²¹

⁵¹⁷ Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 250.

⁵¹⁸ Mrs Titilayo Oluwatudimu spoke about herself as called to be a missionary to Europe, and her work in the school as mission work (focussing on conversion of character if not faith) as well as ministry in a broader sense.

⁵¹⁹ Interview, Mrs Titilayo Oluwatudimu, February 2019.

⁵²⁰ Interview, Pastor Anthony Hodgkinson, February 2019; Interview, Pastor Doug Williams, February 2019.

⁵²¹ Interview, Pastor Anthony Hodgkinson, February 2019.

This expansion of imagination, in terms of where God's rule might be seen, opens up the possibilities for the myriad of contexts in which people may encounter God's holistic salvation. If the gathered church is the centre-point of encounter for classical pentecostals, then progressives both retain this expectation of encounter in the church but also recognise missional work of the Spirit through the church in the wider world. As Mrs Oluwatudimu explained:

'yes...come back to church because you're supposed to be a congregation of believers, iron sharpens iron, but Monday to Saturday that's my church out there [points out of the window] that is me living out what has happened on a Sunday'.⁵²²

However, this individualised approach to mission does have its limitations and other progressive pentecostals have taken an approach that is more organised and directly political. If this individualised missional approach represents the kind of prophetic church engagement in which the church seeks to raise individuals for politics (as well as other sectors) then community organising is one example of progressive pentecostals seeking to develop the church's prophetic witness as a whole community.⁵²³ This is seen in the example of one church I studied, based in a large city in England which has joined a broad-based community organising alliance called Citizens UK. Following the model used by Saul Alinsky in 1960s Chicago, the objective is to build mass organisations 'to seize power and give it to the people.'⁵²⁴ They accomplish this through building alliances between civil society institutions like churches, other religious groups, schools and voluntary associations to 'act on the issues and concerns that mattered most to them'.⁵²⁵ There are a handful of classical

⁵²² Interview, Mrs Titilayo Oluwatudimu, February 2019.

⁵²³ Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 250-1.

⁵²⁴ Saul D. Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals* (New York: Vintage Books, 1971) 3.

⁵²⁵ Paul Bunyan, "Broad-based organizing in the UK: reasserting the centrality of political activity in community development," *Community Development Journal* 45, no. 1, (2010): 111-127.

pentecostal congregations who participate in Citizens UK, and Bishop Eric Brown while National Bishop of the NTC, served on its National Executive for several years.⁵²⁶ Pentecostal membership of such alliances demonstrates two important shifts. On the one hand, pentecostals signal a willingness to engage in creative conflict by confronting the powers for the sake of justice.⁵²⁷ Community organising goes beyond acts of kindness to the poor, and instead deals with the matters of power and disempowerment in systems and structures which are inevitably confrontational. This is the truly prophetic edge of progressive pentecostalism in Britain. In addition, progressives who organise are practicing a commitment to solidarity with their neighbours, which is a move away from political antagonism that has been ascribed to some pentecostals.⁵²⁸ We will discuss this matter of solidarity particularly in interfaith service in the next section.

5.2.4 Eschatology, The Kingdom and Creation

Progressive pentecostals are by definition distinct from the otherworldly orientation described in Miller and Yamamori's categorisation. When it comes to eschatology, progressive pentecostals are distinct in that they de-centre the dispensationalist perspectives and premillennialism of their foremothers and forefathers, in which their ultimate hope is for the return of Christ as judge and their escape from this world to the next.⁵²⁹ Instead, progressive pentecostals have a more hopeful expectation for signs of the kingdom of God in the present, which encompass social and political transformation, not only religious and individualised experiences. Progressive eschatology is characterised by an expectation that the signs of the coming kingdom – yet to be fully inaugurated at the second

⁵²⁶ "In conversation with Bishop Dr Eric Brown," Citizens UK, accessed January 20, 2021, https://www.citizensuk.org/in_conversation_with_bishop_dr_eric_brown.

⁵²⁷ Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 251.

⁵²⁸ Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 26-31; Bretherton, *Christ and the Common Life*, 146-7.

⁵²⁹ Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 143-172; Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 319-20, 324.

coming of Christ – should be seen in all spheres, private and public, ecclesial and political. Progressives resist the trap of eschatological obsession which has ensnared some within the wider classical stream, generating an ‘anaemic ecclesiology’ and/or a ‘deficient theology of history’.⁵³⁰ In contrast, progressive pentecostals are active in seeking social transformation with their ministry underpinned by hope and empowered by the Spirit in obedience to Christ. Progressives demonstrate Frank Macchia’s summation that eschatology for pentecostals, ‘is not simply about the end times as the last chapter of a theological system’ but rather ‘is a living hope that affects the entire Christian life.’⁵³¹ This ‘living hope’ underpins progressive engagement with the world, rather than generating a separation from it.

We can see this shift from an eschatology of detachment (which leads to withdrawal) to an eschatology of renewal (which motivates engagement), when we analyse the sermons preached in progressive pentecostal churches. Preaching is the method by which classical pentecostal leaders and pastors are able to teach and shape the perspectives of the believers under their care. Historically, it has been through preaching, that classical pentecostals have shared the ‘messages’ which they have received from the Lord, including words of judgment and otherworldly concerns.⁵³² Yet preaching within progressive spaces illustrates the shift from concerns about the second coming of Christ to an emphasis on hope for the present life. When analysing the sermons preached at ECCi and two other large pentecostal churches with progressive orientation, none of them involved a focus on the

⁵³⁰ Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 325.

⁵³¹ Frank D. Macchia, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Theology," In *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology*, ed. Jerry L. Walls (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 283.

⁵³² Lee Roy Martin, "Towards a Biblical Model of Pentecostal Prophetic Preaching." *Verbum Et Ecclesia* 37, no. 1 (2016): 4-7.

eschatological themes which categorised early classical pentecostalism.⁵³³ Preachers did not prioritise sermons on the second coming of Christ, the rapture, the final judgement, the fear of hell or the hopes of heaven. Instead, preachers made only occasional comments on these matters, focussing their sermons overall on themes of health and well-being, family life, mission in society and social justice.⁵³⁴ Preachers sought, it seems, to captivate the imaginations of their congregants regarding life in the present and what it means to be a Christian living within the reality of the now-but-not-yet kingdom of God. The absence of sermons on the second coming should not be read as a rejection of classical eschatology but, but potentially as a sign of attempts to broaden eschatological narratives to include social transformation. As Murray Dempster explains:

‘the second coming of Jesus Christ as an apocalyptic act at the end of this age - when interpreted within a Pentecost-kingdom framework - can inspire hope in today’s church that God’s redemptive reign will find consummation in a new creation. Such a hope places God’s stamp of significance on the massive human effort and the sacrificial expenditure of resources that go into supporting programs of Christian social service and action. Such a hope is buoyed up by the conviction that God will preserve, transform and incorporate the church’s kingdom-signifying deeds into the new creation when Jesus returns to bring the reign of God to its promised fulfilment.’⁵³⁵

This more holistic eschatology acts as a corrective to the classical focus on the second coming and final judgment which often undermined any concern for the here and now. However, progressives also run a risk of losing the eternal aspects of eschatology by going to the other extreme. In one progressive classical pentecostal church, a sermon series called ‘long live the king’ focussed on Jesus as king in the here and now, within the lives of

⁵³³ Sermons analysed from Sept 2017 - Sept 2018.

⁵³⁴ Sermon analysis revealed none of three church case studies engaged with classical pentecostal eschatological themes as the main topic. Occasional comments were made about ‘eternity’ and the ‘kingdom’ as eschatological hope within several sermons at ECCi, and one other church.

⁵³⁵ Murray Dempster, “Christian Social Concern in Pentecostal Perspective: Reformulating Pentecostal Eschatology,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* no. 2 (April 1993): 64.

individuals and within the church, but not on his return at all, or the kingdom in relation to the wider world. The preacher opened by stating: 'as followers of Jesus Christ it would be easy for us in theory to say that God is our king, but the practice is shown through our time, our energy and our finances.' This sermon series takes an entirely 'this-worldly' and individualised approach to the recognition of Christ's kingship. The preacher speaks about 'kingdom culture' but focuses on interpersonal relationships (grace, forgiveness, rejecting prejudice) and commitment to the church (punctuality and generosity in time, energy and finance). In other words, as I have explained elsewhere, while there is a clear vision of what a saved or kingdom-oriented individual *person* may look like, there is lack of coherency regarding what a saved or kingdom-infiltrated *world* may be like.⁵³⁶ This reducing of the kingdom to the church and interpersonal relationships is not representative of all progressives as we have seen, but this case highlights the tensions that remain even for pentecostals who have a progressive orientation. The focus on the urgent matters of the present life at the expense of the eternal, constitutes an over-realised eschatology in which as Bretherton explains 'politics (or social ethics in this case) has to bear the full weight of human meaning and possibilities.'⁵³⁷ It is holding together the matters of social ethics and politics with the hope of 'God's redemptive reign' as Dempster describes,⁵³⁸ that the imbalance is rectified.

One area that often neglected even in the this-worldly eschatology of progressives, is the matter of ecology and creation-care. It is clear, as other scholars have argued, that the dispensationalism of classical pentecostal eschatology which expects the rapture of the

⁵³⁶ Stone, "Pentecostal power, 28.

⁵³⁷ Bretherton, *Christ and the Common Life*, 135.

⁵³⁸ Dempster, "Christian Social Concern in Pentecostal Perspective," 64.

saints from the earth, and the subsequent destruction of the earth in an apocalyptic war, undermines interest in this area.⁵³⁹ It is also true, I suggest, that the anthropocentrism of even progressive pentecostal theology, risks neglecting this crucial area of reflection even further. We are concerned in this thesis with holistic embodied encounter with the Spirit and the possibility for holistic transformation of human experience. Yet any notion of transformation for humanity must also address the natural environment in which humans live, move and have their being. As Daniela Augustine explains: 'our personal and societal well-being is intricately connected to the well-being of the globe'.⁵⁴⁰ There is not ample space to conduct this work here, but I want to note that the imbalance created by an individualised and anthropocentric focus within theology, undermines the opportunity to integrate creation care into theology and discipleship. Ecology does feature within pentecostal scholarship and the shift away from otherworldliness in pentecostal imaginations, may open the path towards deeper thought and practice in this area.⁵⁴¹

5.3 Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to define progressive pentecostalism and to explain the theological underpinnings of progressive pentecostalism in Britain. I have argued that progressives in Britain are drawing on their heritage as they engage socially in the present and push into the political organising and engagement. I have argued that progressive

⁵³⁹ Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 327-322; Jeffrey S. Lamp, "New Heavens and New Earth," *Pneuma* 36, no. 1 (2014): 64-80.

⁵⁴⁰ Daniela C. Augustine, "Pentecostal Communal Economics and the Household of God," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 19, no. 2 (2010): 220

⁵⁴¹ Steven M. Studebaker, "The Spirit in Creation: A Unified Theology of Grace and Creation Care," *Zygon* 43, no. 4 (December 2008): 943-60; Amos Yong, ed, *The Spirit renews the face of the Earth: Pentecostal forays in science and theology of creation* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2009); Robby Waddell, "Apocalyptic Sustainability The Future of Pentecostal Ecology" in *Perspectives in Pentecostal Eschatologies*, eds. Peter Althouse and Robby Waddell (Cambridge: James Clarke Company, Limited, 2012); A. J. Swoboda, ed, *Blood Cries Out: Pentecostals, Ecology and the Groans of Creation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2014); Augustine, *The Spirit and the Common Good*, 81-3, 106-8, 113-5; Mark Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 182.

pentecostals in contemporary Britain are drawn to Jesus as a social, political and public figure, and as a result, their own discipleship is holistic and responsive to those in need. Nevertheless, I have suggested that further attention to the embodiment of Jesus, would deepen both the capacity for holistic discipleship and the urgency regarding public action for justice. We then discussed the church-world dualism, where I argued that progressives recognise the worldliness in the church and the potential for goodness in the world as they practice being neighbours with others. Where dualisms persist, progressives are committed to engagement and not withdrawal for the sake of restraining evil in public life. In the next section we observed that mission is crucial for progressive pentecostals, but rather than focusing solely on individual conversion, mission also involves all acts of service and movements for justice which allow people to encounter God's goodness and presence. I argued that mission encompasses influence in all the sectors of public life including through political organisation, representing a shift to recognising God's kingdom beyond the church walls. Finally, we considered eschatology which for progressives, involves a shift towards hopefulness about what is possible in the present life. We noted both the risk of an over-realised eschatology and the ecological concerns what must also be drawn into any theology and action regarding human flourishing.

6 PROGRESSIVISM AND POWER: RACE, GENDER AND MINISTRY AMONG ‘THE LEAST OF THESE’

In chapter 5 we gave our attention to the theological underpinnings of progressive pentecostalism in Britain, as the stream most closely aligned towards pneumatic integralism in the contemporary movement. We saw that the progressive orientation within classical pentecostalism is identified by particular theological emphases which exhibit both continuity and discontinuity with their early classical predecessors. Yet as I have sought to demonstrate in this thesis, pentecostals have historically been (and continue to be) impacted by their experiences of cultural and political norms beyond the religious, even if these may not be named explicitly or considered to be as significant as religious experiences. We have seen principally that Britain’s class-based, colonial and patriarchal history continues to set norms for British society, and by extension, norms for Britain’s pentecostals. As exemplified by Bishop Charles Mason, any approach to rectifying inequalities and working towards the liberation of oppressed groups, demands both a commitment to critical reflection and action within the church as well as in public life. Therefore, while it may be true as Jonathan Chism argues, that political action by pentecostals depends upon ‘pentecostal critical consciousness’⁵⁴² this should not be directed solely to the ‘world’ but also towards the church.

We have also seen that the ethical and political power of pentecostalism is often hampered by an inadequate anthropology, rooted in a pneumatic dualism. A limited view of the Spirit’s work in relation to all aspects of embodiment (including the political and social significance), undermines the attentiveness to embodiment which would generate political

⁵⁴² Pentecostal critical awareness: “an awareness of the spiritual, social, political, and economic roots of oppression and an effort to combat the spiritual and structural dimensions of social oppression,” Chism, “The Saints Go Marching,” 442.

action. In other words, pneumatic dualism undermines ‘pentecostal critical consciousness.’ However, the ‘critical consciousness’ that I am arguing is necessary for progressive pentecostals is not a purely political consciousness which address ‘roots’ and ‘structural dimensions’ (indeed many progressives are already concerned with these matters, considered external).⁵⁴³ Instead, I am suggesting that the political consciousness needed is firstly anthropological in that it attends to embodiment – and particularly the politics of power and disempowerment attached to various bodies. This critical consciousness must be applied both within pentecostal churches and organisations as well as in wider public life, in the way of the Spirit which transcends the church-world, sacred-secular dualism.

In this chapter we will seek to determine the extent to which such a critical consciousness (which is attentive to embodiment) exists, by considering the extent of pneumatic integralism for progressives in Britain. The principal question of this chapter is: to what extent do progressive pentecostals embrace the whole of human personhood, by integrating the matters of embodiment with spirituality and addressing the matters of embodiment in ministry practice? We will begin with an examination of church leaders’ responses to racial justice to explore the capacity of progressive leaders to address the realities of the racializing of bodies. In the second section we will look beyond the church to those pentecostal leaders who transcend particular tensions and dualisms in their public engagement as they deal with the realities of socio-economic inequality and those whose bodies are marked by poverty and disadvantage. In the third section, we will address the matter of gender and power, arguing that a recognition of the particularity of women’s experiences and needs for justice, evades the attention of leaders within progressive

⁵⁴³ Chism, “The Saints Go Marching,” 442.

pentecostal churches and community leaders.

6.1 Race and Discipleship in the Progressive Pentecostal Churches

On Monday 25th May 2020 George Floyd, an African American man was physically assaulted by police, with one officer kneeling on his neck for 8 minutes 46 seconds, resulting in his death.⁵⁴⁴ The responses of the church and Christian leaders, have been the subject of much reflection and scrutiny on social media as well as in various online panel discussions, articles and blogs.⁵⁴⁵ This tragic event has sparked discussions and reflections on race and racism in churches, as it has done in sectors across society. In this first section we will examine progressive pentecostal church responses to George Floyd's murder, as an example of the range of pentecostals' capacity to integrate the matters of embodiment (and in this case the racializing of bodies) and injustice, into their spirituality, theological reflection and ministry.

We will conduct our analysis of ECCi, our main church case study, and the same two anonymised churches ('Church One' and 'Church Two') that we have seen thus far. The analysis will depend upon online resources including sermons, church services and social media posts with the full recognition that the social media accounts of senior leaders and churches will not represent the range of perspectives within the congregation.

Nevertheless, we recognise that pentecostal pastors are looked to for leadership by their congregation and others at such moments and so influence the spiritual and theological formation of pentecostal believers.⁵⁴⁶ We will see that for some progressive pentecostals,

⁵⁴⁴ "How George Floyd Was Killed in Police Custody," *New York Times*, accessed August 28, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/31/us/george-floyd-investigation.html>.

⁵⁴⁵ Greenbelt, "Black Lives Matter: Is the Church Complicit?" YouTube, accessed September 16, 2020 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4ctaJZgOUQ&t=10s>; Krish Kandiah, "Why I took my children to a Black Lives Matter protest." Premier Christianity, accessed September 13, 2020, [https://www.premierchristianity.com/Blog/Why-I-took-my-children-to-a-Black-Lives-Matter-protest](https://www.premierchristianity.com/Blog/Why-I-took-my-children-to-a-Black-Lives-Matter-protest;); Chine McDonald, "Is the Church of England Racist?" *The Church Times*, accessed September 16, 2020, <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2020/3-july/features/features/is-the-church-of-england-racist>.

⁵⁴⁶ For a critical discussion of the moral role and responsibility of the pastor in pentecostalism see Dela

discipleship and mission can be comprised as they were historically, by an inability to integrate the variety of human experience - and particularly in this example, racial trauma - into spirituality, theology and action. On the other hand, there are signs of development and growth as not only black leaders, but white pentecostal leaders seek to critically engage with racial inequality as part of their enabling of holistic discipleship.

6.1.1 Church One: Repeating History?

6.1.1.1 Divine Action, Human Irresponsibility.

Church One is a large ethnically mixed congregation based in a major English city which is also very diverse. Around 35% of the congregation is of African or African Caribbean heritage, and the church is led by a white couple and overseen by a board of trustees. As a progressive pentecostal church, Church One has shifted from focussing solely on the 'religious' concerns which preoccupied the majority of classical pentecostals historically (i.e., worship and individual encounter) over and above the matters deemed 'political' (i.e., social care and political action). In the opening to the first service after Floyd's death, the senior pastor acknowledges that the church will have seen the news about the 'tragic situation associated with George Floyd' which he affirms he is praying for.⁵⁴⁷ He brings this matter right into the Sunday morning service, the prime moment in the formational life of pentecostal believers.⁵⁴⁸ By drawing this incident in to the pinnacle moment of worship and prayer the pastor makes it clear that what might be considered to be 'political' and distinct from the 'spiritual' or 'religious' is in fact relevant to faith, spirituality and ultimately to God.

Quampah, *Good Pastors, Bad Pastors: Pentecostal Ministerial Ethics in Ghana* (Eugene Or: Wipf and Stock, 2014). For a general overview of pentecostal leadership see Virginia A. Christel, "The Pentecostal Leader" in *Religious Leadership: A Reference Handbook* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2013) 119-126.

⁵⁴⁷ Church Facebook page, accessed August 27, 2020.

⁵⁴⁸ Daniel E. Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: a Ritual approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic spirituality* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999); Lisa P. Stephenson, "Pentecostalism and Experience," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 28, no.2 (2019): 186-201.

The pastor models an integrated perspective on life, in which all of reality, is recognised as spiritually relevant.

However, the pastor then slips back into a disintegrated perspective, by not calling for human action empowered by the Spirit, but instead and opting instead for a spiritualised solution. He states, 'more than ever we need God to work in our nation and in the nations of the world'.⁵⁴⁹ This encouragement to recognise God as one who intervenes and acts in history is not a problem in itself, in fact belief in God as the ultimate agent is paramount for pentecostal (and Christian) theology across the board. Pentecostal theology is underpinned by belief in a God who acts to save, sanctify, heal, baptise and bring time to its fullness. It is understandable why in the light of this, pentecostals may rely heavily on God's power in place of using their own. If 'divine power can do more in an instant than merely political power can accomplish in decades,⁵⁵⁰' then a complete dependency on God's action alone, may seem pragmatic. However, this particular theology of power completely undermines the power of human beings to create and alter reality. By talking about the activity of God without mentioning the need for human activity, the pastor, however unintentionally, encourages an abdication of responsibility on the part listeners who have the potential themselves to 'work in (their) nation'. Where he does mention human activity he juxtaposes it, against the work of the Spirit, stating, 'we can talk about racial diversity and tensions, but what we need is the Holy Spirit'.⁵⁵¹ By juxtaposing the relational work of talking against needing the Holy Spirit, the pastor portrays an unhelpful dualism. An integrated perspective on the Spirit's work *and* on human life and discipleship, may have recognised the Spirit's

⁵⁴⁹ Church Facebook page, accessed August 27, 2020.

⁵⁵⁰ Brown, "Pentecostal power," 37.

⁵⁵¹ Church Facebook page, accessed August 27, 2020.

presence in the empowerment of believers to be attentive to the stories of a diverse community, and in the call to solidarity and response.

This often-forgotten work of the Spirit is brought to our attention in the work of Matthias Wenk's which focuses on the early church after Pentecost. In addressing the reconciliation role of the Spirit in the case of Peter and Cornelius, and the Ethiopian eunuch, Wenk writes:

'...the Spirit initiated a communication process that otherwise would not have begun and both times the story is told in a way to reflect the initial reluctance on the part of the 'missionary'. The subsequent conversion and charismatic manifestation (with the Samaritans and Cornelius) redefined the community's self-understanding by adding the converts to the church...'⁵⁵²

Wenk's perspective highlights the need for an integrated view of the Spirit's relational work not only drawing people to God but people to one another. This communication process which is recorded in the scriptures as direct from the Spirit to people, might also be expanded to include the way in which the Spirit might communicate to us through others. It would seem that Spirit-empowered, prophetic speech might also include the Spirit's empowerment of the oppressed to speak up about their suffering, bringing into the light the hidden sins of our world. This communication process Wenk describes involves dialogue between the powerful and those with less power, between those with certain ethnic, religious and cultural privileges and those who lack them. Part of this dialogue will inevitably involve lament, which must not be forgotten by pentecostals, as Stephen Torr has argued.⁵⁵³ For progressive pentecostals then, the Spirit can be understood as present and operating in different ways, offering different gifts. For those with privilege and power, the Spirit may

⁵⁵² Matthias Wenk, *Community-forming power: the socio-ethical role of the Spirit in Luke-Acts* (London: T&T Clark International, 2004) 307-8.

⁵⁵³ Stephen Charles Torr, "A dramatic Pentecostal/Charismatic Anti-Theodicy: improvising on a divine performance of lament" (PhD Diss., University of Birmingham, 2012) 266-7.

offer conviction and draw them to repentance as they listen not just to God directly, but to the testimonies of their siblings.⁵⁵⁴

In Church One it is suggested that the Holy Spirit functions in transcendent and disembodied ways to resolve the problems of racial injustice. The role of the believer is simply to pray, and to implore God to act. The Spirit is not understood to be present and engaged in the matter of eradicating racism, which is in this thesis, one of the core aspects of the politics of embodiment. We might consider this disintegrated understanding of the Spirit's work and of the life of the disciple, to be a reminiscent of early classical pentecostal limitations.

6.1.1.2 The Limits of White Leadership

We do not only see an echo of the past in the distinction made divine and human 'work' but even more poignantly, in the reluctance to recognise and integrate the diversity of human experience into spirituality, theology and worldview. To put it more directly, we see the prominence of white power as it pertains to spirituality, theology and church life in Church One particularly. The prominence of white leadership, culture and norms in ethnically mixed churches - including those with significant numbers of black and Asian congregants - is not uncommon in Britain as Ben Lindsay's work has demonstrated.⁵⁵⁵ For the most part Church One fits with this norm. The church is led by a white man and a white-passing woman of non-European heritage.⁵⁵⁶ There is no mention of a leadership team or eldership on their

⁵⁵⁴ McQueen, *Joel and the Spirit*, 48-50.

⁵⁵⁵ This racialised power dynamic has become known as the 'Guinness Effect' in popular language. See Lee Jasper, "Human Zoo: The show must not go on," Operation Black Vote, accessed September 16, 2020 <https://www.obv.org.uk/news-blogs/human-zoo-show-must-not-go>; Lindsay, *We Need to Talk About Race*, 105-6.

⁵⁵⁶ By 'white-passing' I mean that she appears to belong to a white ethnic group though she would be categorised as a woman of colour. See Nicholas Vargas, 'Latino/s whitening?: Which latina/os self-classify as white and report being perceived as white by other Americans?' *Du Bois Review* 12, no. 1 (Spring, 2015): 119-136; Church website, accessed September 2, 2010.

website, who may bring diverse voices into leadership, although they may exist but simply not be publicly identified. The church depends upon volunteer life group leaders who function at the lower levels and are more representative of what is an ethnically diverse congregation.⁵⁵⁷ I mention this to say that while the pastor reduces the matter of racism to ‘racial diversity and tensions’, it is clear in this context, that the problem of race is one of power and privilege. The power holders in this context, are ill-equipped to respond to this moment not simply because they are white, but because they are unaware of their whiteness. Inhabiting the world in bodies racialised as white, and not being mindful of what this means for them, renders them blind to the matters of racism. As church leaders, this means that they are inattentive to what racial and ethnic diversity means for a congregation in terms of diversity of experience, and the reality of black trauma, particularly surrounding George Floyd’s murder.

The lack of attentiveness to both white power and black political experience are exhibited very directly in the lack of resources to address the matter of racial justice in theological terms. On Sunday 7th June, which we might consider to be the first Sunday in which churches were able to offer a considered response to what was at this stage a worldwide moment of grief and outrage, the preacher at Church One repeated a sermon from 2018.⁵⁵⁸ The sermon was updated with a comment relating to Covid-19 but not in relation to George Floyd’s murder which was dominating headlines alongside worldwide ‘black lives matter’ protests. The sermon included vague moralising instructions, which may have been aimed at assuaging the tensions without naming and addressing the core of the matter. The preacher warns listeners not to ‘get distracted’, to ‘keep the main thing the

⁵⁵⁷ Church Website, accessed September 2, 2020.

⁵⁵⁸ Church Podcast, accessed September 16, 2020.

main thing 'and to 'stay focussed on the kingdom of God and what he is doing'.⁵⁵⁹ He implores people saying 'make sure your conversation is full of grace' and tells people to face the week with 'a different heart and a different spirit'.⁵⁶⁰ While we cannot know what exactly the preacher meant, or the impact of these words on the congregation, the choice to focus on individual piety over and against collective reflection and action, signals a retreat from an integrated understanding of faith. The plea to stay focused 'on the kingdom 'does not seem to be a plea to work towards the realities of the kingdom of justice and peace, but rather asserts the classic dualism in which the kingdom is purely spiritual, and not concerned with 'earthly 'matters. The encouragement to respond with grace in a time of grief, without a recognition of pain and anger, indicates a neglect of the integral nature of human beings and the recognition of emotions as created by God as part of our humanity.

In failing to name racism or the murder of George Floyd a second time, in a congregation which is at least a third black, the leaders exhibit what Robin DiAngelo describes as 'white fragility'.⁵⁶¹ Rather than choosing the uncomfortable and prophetic work of calling out the sinfulness of white oppression which had been exposed at the time, this message is in fact an act of silence. The comfort of the white leaders and white majority is prioritised over the healing and pastoral care of their black members, and the uncomfortable but necessary work of challenging the dominant white perspective. This

⁵⁵⁹ Church Facebook page, accessed August 28, 2020.

⁵⁶⁰ Church Facebook page, accessed August 28, 2020.

⁵⁶¹ 'Given how seldom we (white people) encounter racial discomfort in a society we dominate, we haven't had to build our racial stamina...We perceive any attempt to connect us to the system of racism as an unsettling and unfair moral offence. The smallest amount of racial stress is intolerable - the mere suggestion that being white has meaning often triggers a range of defensive responses. These include emotions such as anger, fear and guilt and behaviours such as argumentation, silence and withdrawal from the stress-inducing situation.' Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why it's so hard for white people to talk about race* (London: Penguin, 2019) 6.

failure to recognise the experiences of black people and particularly those black Christian siblings, equates to a form of 'anti-Blackness' as Valentina Alexander explains:

'...the unwillingness to merge the real interests of oppressed Black people (expressed through the liberational spirituality of the church) with the theological articulation of the Gospel...is a negation of the value of Blackness and therefore, essentially anti-liberational...'⁵⁶²

Put in different terms, the encouragement towards personal piety and a forgetfulness of 'political' matters (or at least an off handing of responsibility for them to God) is for Alexander, 'anti-liberational'. We might also label this 'anti-pneumatic' in keeping with our reading of early pentecostal resistance to the Spirit's holistic work. Liberation, understood to be the valuing of black life according to Alexander, depends upon both the recognition of black bodies and their needs and a hermeneutic of liberation with regards to the biblical text. These theological perspectives have been offered by black preachers, pastors and theologians, fluent in the resources which sustain black life in the midst of anguish, and yet they are not engaged at all in this white space where black believers - and also white believers - are in need of them.⁵⁶³ When it comes to progressive pentecostals exemplified by church one, the inattentiveness to black experience makes a liberating hermeneutic impossible.

6.1.2 Church Two and ECCi: Steps Forward

6.1.2.1 Openness to Holy Interruption

In the aftermath of George Floyd's murder, the senior leaders of Church Two conducted a prayer meeting with their congregation and publicly mourned the racially motivated deaths

⁵⁶² Alexander, "Breaking Every Fetter?" 349.

⁵⁶³ See Anthony Reddie's description of black theology as: 'the specific self-named disciplines of re-interpreting Christian traditions and practices in light of liberationist themes and concepts, which arise out of black experiences.' Reddie, *Working Against the Grain*, 17.

of black people in the UK and abroad, committing to 'always believe in justice and stand against racism. The following week the entire service was dedicated to the theme of race and reconciliation with the senior leaders stating that church 'could not be business as usual'.⁵⁶⁴ They listened to the stories of black church members and leaders, praying and committing to dialogue and ongoing reflection.⁵⁶⁵ In their response, the leadership of Church Two demonstrates an awareness of the nuances of African diaspora identity, by drawing the connections between the experiences of African Americans murdered by police and those of Black British people killed in racially motivated attacks.⁵⁶⁶ They are willing to name explicitly the matter at hand, affirming that the experiences of black people are seen and taken seriously. In their willingness to dedicate their Sunday service to the theme of race and reconciliation, they welcome what we might consider a 'holy interruption' that is at once divine and human, theological and political, spiritual and tangible.⁵⁶⁷

Pentecostals are used to the notion of divine interruption in life and in worship. It is common for pentecostals from the earliest days until now, to speak about the Holy Spirit 'taking control' as a way of describing a spiritually vibrant encounter in which timings and service schedules - the markers of human limitations - are laid aside to make room for spiritual experience.⁵⁶⁸ Though this decision to pause the usual schedule at Church Two in

⁵⁶⁴ Church Twitter page accessed August 27, 2020.

⁵⁶⁵ Online Church Service, Youtube, accessed August 27, 2020.

⁵⁶⁶ For a discussion of the complexities of African diasporic identity particularly in Europe and America, see Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993).

⁵⁶⁷ In *Spirit-Word-Community*, Yong describes our encounter with the spirit as often interpreted as irruption (Spirit breaking forth from within), interruption (Spirit breaking forth from the outside) and disruption (Spirit breaking in from above, Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 224. Although on the one hand the presence of the Spirit is within the community irrupting, the trigger of George Floyd's murder, moves us to recognise this move of the Spirit as being based in the wider political space and interrupting the church.

⁵⁶⁸ 'Sunday morning the Free Methodist pastor having a regular appointment there, opened the meeting with a hymn and prayer then made a few remarks in a sweet, Christ-like spirit-said he was open to conviction but wanted God to lead him. He then turned the meeting over to us, sat down, and got blest. Hallelujah! The Lord took full possession and we closed with twelve seekers at the altar. At night again the Spirit took control.' "Pentecost in Washington," *The Apostolic Faith* (January 1907) 4.

order to make room for an unusual service, is not spoken of as an act of the Spirit, the parallels are striking. At Church Two, the Spirit can indeed be said to have ‘taken control,’ though not for the purpose of the joyous and exuberant worship of a revival, but for the purpose of stirring up lament and repentance. This seems to be no less a move of the Spirit than the stirring up of joy and is consistent with the stories of earliest revivals in Wales and at Azusa Street where people repented and confessed as they fell under the power and conviction of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁶⁹ Joy may in fact be incumbent upon an openness to ‘holy interruption’ through which a person and church might see and repent of their sin, and the sins of the world. It is this openness to the Holy Spirit that gives an opportunity for transformation within the hearts of individuals and in the relationships and power dynamics within the church.

For Church Two, there is an openness to the challenging process of listening and learning, with the recognition that they can rely on the Spirit’s help. The senior pastor acknowledges the challenge of discussing racism but also considers it to be ‘much-needed’ and so he implores the church to ‘trust the Holy Spirit to do the work that he needs to do in all of us.’⁵⁷⁰ The pastor of Church two is clear that the work of uprooting racism is a matter of Christian discipleship that must be done, stating outright that one ‘cannot be a Christian and harbour racist views.’⁵⁷¹ While a critique of this approach should highlight the pastor’s choice to focus on the interpersonal aspects of racism at the expense of the crucial conversation about power and structures, he makes an important link for progressive pentecostals between the work of the Holy Spirit and the work of anti-racism. This is a

⁵⁶⁹ “In Homestead, Pa” *The Apostolic Faith* (April 1907) 1.

⁵⁷⁰ Online Church Service, Youtube, accessed August 27, 2020.

⁵⁷¹ Online Church Service, Youtube, accessed August 27, 2020.

crucial contrast with the perspective of Church One were pneumatic and human action were juxtaposed against one another. The pastor at Church Two offers us a more holistic and political understanding of the Spirit's work which is not only seeking to work within individuals, but in the midst of community.

6.1.2.2 Willingness to Engage Discomfort

ECCi was very active on social media in the aftermath of George Floyd's murder, and their responses were marked by a readiness to respond theologically and pastorally to what had taken place. A statement was made on the church's social media declaring that the church 'deplores racism in all its forms' and affirming that 'black lives matter.'⁵⁷² Pastor Anthony then shared an online devotional to lead their congregation to understand what a Christian response might involve, and the Sunday service was dedicated to the theme of black dignity.⁵⁷³

ECCi's response to the matter of George Floyd's murder and the protests to defend black lives and assert black dignity, exhibits a theological conviction that the cause of racial justice is not a distraction from spirituality and faith, but rather, is core to the Gospel. This perspective, I would suggest, is linked very directly to the culture of learning and listening with ECCi's leaders exhibit. Pastor Anthony explained that he and Pastor Doug are leading 'less from the front and more from the centre', taking what he called a more collaborative

⁵⁷² "ECCi deplores racism in all its forms. We believe according to Genesis 1:26-28 that all mankind is made in the image of God and as such are of equal worth and value. All lives matter, but in the recent example of George Floyd, we wish to affirm that BLACK LIVES MATTER #blackouttuesday" Emmanuel Community Church, Facebook, accessed August 27, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/Emmanuel-Community-Church-International-110217735867/>

⁵⁷³ "Bitterness of Spirit - Thought of the day with Pastor Anthony Hodgkinson," Emmanuel Community Church International, Facebook, accessed August 27, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/110217735867/videos/271906870845710/>; "Sunday 7 June 2020 Service," Emmanuel Community Church International, Facebook, accessed August 27, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=906949309780716&extid=I4Pihwb0aoLSsu1s>.

approach to leadership rather than a 'Mosaic' model of 'follow me or die in the desert.'⁵⁷⁴

By this he meant that he and Pastor Doug are increasingly responding to the perspectives and priorities of the congregation in their setting of vision and agenda, rather than the congregation simply following their directions. This leadership approach might also be called *constructive* because of the ways in which the leader is led as well as leading, rather than it being assumed that they have all of the perspectives and knowledge necessary to lead.⁵⁷⁵

For Pastor Anthony in particular, evidence of his own constructive and collaborative approach to leadership, is seen in his capacity to respond deeply and appropriately to the racial justice crisis which emerged. In a time of great confusion and many voices, Pastor Anthony offers clear leadership and indicates what the Christian response must be.

However, as a white pastor, he seeks out the feedback and the challenge of congregants, asking them to 'call him out' for the ways in which he may continue to harbour racist views or perspectives.⁵⁷⁶ He and his leadership are being constructed as he continues to listen and learn in this area.

If Church One exhibits 'anti-blackness' through its inability to integrate black experience and interests and the Gospel, then ECCi demonstrates what might be akin to 'pro-blackness.' Pastor Anthony bases his reflection for the communion service on Exodus 12 rather than their usual text of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, considering Exodus to be 'more

⁵⁷⁴ Interview, Pastor Anthony Hodgkinson, February 2019.

⁵⁷⁵ In scholarship on leadership, the constructive and destructive models are often examined with a preference for the constructive: Michael D. Collins and Chris J. Jackson, "A process model of self-regulation and leadership: How attentional resource capacity and negative emotions influence constructive and destructive leadership," *Leadership Quarterly* 26, no. 3 (2015): 386-402. In education, constructive approaches to learning have more recently replaced the instructive approaches, see John Biggs and Catherine Tang, *Teaching for Quality Learning at University* (Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill Education, 2011). Pastor Anthony seems (in some areas) to lean towards the constructive teacher model in his leadership as pastor.

⁵⁷⁶ For an important discussion of the ongoing work required by white progressives who may still harbour racist prejudices, see R. Coble, "Struggling with Our Racism: White Progressive Christians and Lacan," *Pastoral Psychology* 68 (2019): 561-574

topical' due to the context of oppression being experienced by the Hebrews.⁵⁷⁷ By drawing on the liberation narratives of Exodus, he succeeds in merging 'the real interests of oppressed Black people' and 'the theological articulation of the Gospel' as Alexander argues is crucial to liberation.⁵⁷⁸ This willingness to recognise and address the pain and trauma of the people he is ministering to, alongside his use of a text which has been central to black liberation theology, results in a moment of holistic discipleship for the congregation. Both black and non-black members are offered resources for navigating this moment and for developing as disciples in a holistic manner, with the realities of embodiment and power, engaged with spirituality and faith.

6.1.2.3 Embracing Emotion: Legitimising Anger and Welcoming Lament

In the case of ECCi, the integration of embodied human experience, spirituality and theology is also seen in Pastor Anthony's treatment of anger. Emotional responses have typically been welcomed within pentecostal spirituality insofar as they are considered to signify encounter with the Holy Spirit. Joy, holy laughter and weeping alongside repentance are considered to be indicators of a person undergoing transformation by the Spirit.⁵⁷⁹ However, simultaneously within the classical pentecostal imagination, there is a concern which stems from the earliest pentecostals that emotional response might be *confused* for encounter with the Spirit, or that emotions may motivate decision making or belief over and against true conviction and right doctrine.⁵⁸⁰ While within the pentecostal imagination the perfection of God means God's emotions – including anger – are always holy, human beings

⁵⁷⁷ "Sunday 7 June 2020 Service," Emmanuel Community Church International, Facebook, accessed August 27, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=906949309780716&extid=I4Piwhb0aoLSsu1s>

⁵⁷⁸ Alexander, "Breaking Every Fetter?" 349.

⁵⁷⁹ Alexander Boddy, *The Apostolic Faith* (June-Sept 1907) 1.

⁵⁸⁰ Douglas Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit: Theologies of the Early Pentecostal Movement* (Indiana University Press, 2003) 98, 121.

corrupted by sin must be suspicious of their emotions. Anger then, is not associated with holiness for human beings, even though the 'wrath of God' is considered valid and acceptable in theological terms.⁵⁸¹ Anger, like all human emotions, may tempt the person into sinful behaviour, hence the commonly heard admonition to be angry 'but sin not'.⁵⁸² Yet in this instance, Pastor Anthony declares that those who are angry 'are right to be angry', and draws righteous human anger into the holy anger of God, stating that 'God is (with the indication, of 'also') angry'.⁵⁸³ While pentecostals have historically welcomed emotion within encounter with God, the honouring of human emotions in and of themselves, and especially of emotions often deemed negative, is the crucial shift here. Pastor Anthony goes on to encourage the listeners to 'pour out the bitterness of your soul to God or others' asserting that suppression will not help.⁵⁸⁴ The anger Pastor Anthony encourages is not one which leads to violence, but one which is core to lament.

In his work on lament within the pentecostal/charismatic tradition, Stephen Torr concludes that the Holy Spirit acts as an 'pneumatological aid' to lament.⁵⁸⁵ Using Jesus's own 'performances of lament' as a model, he argues that lament provides a voice for 'those who protest regarding the painful absence of the 'now' of the Kingdom in the 'not yet' of the present.⁵⁸⁶ It is the 'not yet' of the present, that I would argue is the trigger for righteous anger as well as for lament.⁵⁸⁷ A righteous anger which arises in response to anti-black violence, is deeply connected to lament for a world in which hatred prevails over

⁵⁸¹ Jacobsen, *Reader in Pentecostal Theology*, 216.

⁵⁸² Ephesians 4:26.

⁵⁸³ "Bitterness of Spirit," Emmanuel Community Church International.

⁵⁸⁴ "Bitterness of Spirit" Emmanuel Community Church International.

⁵⁸⁵ Torr, "A dramatic Pentecostal/Charismatic Anti-Theodicy," 266-7.

⁵⁸⁶ Torr, "A dramatic Pentecostal/Charismatic Anti-Theodicy," 266-7.

⁵⁸⁷ Joel D. Daniels has also made an argument about the connection between love and righteous anger in "The Wind Blows Gently and Fiercely: A Pentecostal Perspective on Love and Anger," *Buddhist - Christian Studies* 39 (2019): 38.

God's reign of justice and peace. Torr's description of the Spirit as a 'pneumatological aid' to lament, is also important for us. We have already seen Wenk's recognition of the Spirit's role in reconciliation and dialogue, and here we find another element of the Spirit's work in stirring up the voices of those who weep. It is the attentiveness to the lament stirred up by the Spirit, which is crucial to discerning sin and righteousness (justice) in the social and political. If the Spirit is associated with the stirring up of lament, might she also be implicated in the stirring up of holy anger? We do not speak of anger as a fruit of the Spirit and yet it seems that both anger and lament function as signs of the Spirit's presence in the believer, testifying to a future hope. In contrast, the absence of anger in the light of atrocities and injustice, may well suggest a spiritual lapse in which those filled with the Spirit are not attuned or are in denial of the Spirit's liberating ways in the world. The suppression of righteous anger and lament may also be considered to represent a stifling of the Spirit, who seeks to elevate the voices of those in distress and call the church towards justice. To attend to the anger and lament of others, is to open oneself up to the voice of the Spirit who cries aloud to awaken those who slumber.

6.1.2.4 The Need for Black Power

Church Two and ECCi exhibit a more holistic pentecostal spirituality and signal an integrated anthropology, in which attending to the racializing of bodies and the matters of justice are core. In both cases, the power dynamics in relation to race are very different to Church One in which a white couple lead over the congregation which is around a third black and there is no other leadership team mentioned.⁵⁸⁸ ECCi has been led for over 20 years by senior pastor Doug Williams who is African Caribbean, and associate pastor Anthony Hodgkinson who is

⁵⁸⁸ Church Website, accessed August 27, 2020.

white. Church Two is led by a mixed-race couple, a white man who is ordained and his wife who is black. We cannot assume the impact of Pastor Doug and the black female leader at Church Two in cultivating a theological framework on race and justice in their respective churches. We have seen historically (as in the case of William Seymour) that personal experience of social and political injustice does not always generate a determination to engage or even reflect theologically on those matters. However, the vast difference in response between Church One and Church Two and ECCi, should cause us to ask what difference it makes to have black power holders within progressive pentecostal churches, especially in those which are ethnically mixed.

Whether in studies of church leadership or leadership more broadly, the case has been made that senior leaders have a significant impact on whether or not organisations foster not only diversity (which speaks primarily to presence) but inclusivity (which deals with the question of power).⁵⁸⁹ In ECCi where the majority of congregants are black, there is no issue regarding inclusivity for ethnic minorities (those minoritised nationally not in the congregation). However, in Church Two, we might ask whether the black senior leader acts as a buffer against the domination of white perspectives and interests, in an ethnically mixed but mainly white congregation.⁵⁹⁰ In contrast to Church One where white leadership fails to acknowledge and respond to the diversity of experience for those racialised as black, the white leaders at ECCi and Church Two both succeed at recognising some of the core issues and responding sensitively. It would seem that in the cases of ECCi and Church Two, having ethnically mixed senior leadership in which black perspectives and interests are welcomed,

⁵⁸⁹ Luis L. Martins, "Strategic Diversity Leadership: The Role of Senior Leaders in Delivering the Diversity Dividend," *Journal of Management* 46, no. 7 (September 2020): 1191–1204; Christena Cleveland, *Disunity in Christ: Uncovering the hidden forces that keep us apart* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2013) 173-175.

⁵⁹⁰ Reddie, *Is God Colour-blind?*, 3-22.

enables a more thoughtful response to the diverse needs of their ethnically mixed congregations. By extension, these churches are also better equipped to serve their ethnically diverse cities and a world in which racial identity and racial justice are significant contemporary concerns.

While we might lament the suggestion that cultural inclusivity and anti-racism are taken seriously principally by white people who have been challenged or educated by black people of equal status, this should not be surprising if we remember the historic prevalence of white supremacy and white power we have seen in chapter 4 [4.2.2.1/2]. However, theologies of racial reconciliation often negate the power dynamic involved between the majority ethnic group and minority ethnic groups. Scott Lewis Adams touches on the question of openness and proximity in his work on the laying on of hands as a model for racial reconciliation, stating that in Acts 8.4-25:

‘Luke provides the reader with a theology of intentionality, vulnerability, and universality that, if applied, may serve to draw otherwise segregated people groups into closer communion with one another.’⁵⁹¹

While intentionality, vulnerability and universality may be important principles, Adams’ focus on interpersonal relationships without dealing with the problem of power, is akin to dealing with the fruit of the problem and not the root. We have seen in the case of the earliest pentecostals, that many white leaders like Parham were in close proximity to their black brethren but were not open to their perspectives and interests and rejected opportunities to share power. Though black leaders like Seymour were intentional, vulnerable and sought to establish universality, their ambitions failed without white cooperation. For progressive pentecostals today, the struggle against racism within the

⁵⁹¹ Scott Lewis Adams, "The Coming of the Spirit and the Laying on of Hands", *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 29, no. 1 (2020): 132.

church, must be recognised as not simply a matter of overcoming personal prejudice but about rearranging the race-based power dynamics that reinforce white supremacy. If - as I have argued [3.3] - some early pentecostals exhibited an 'anti-pneumatic' posture by resisting the Holy Spirit's thwarting of white supremacist race politics, then to be progressive must involve a refusal to repeat that history.

6.2 Integrated Disciples, Holistic Mission.

We have analysed the church as a community of formation, and especially the theological perspectives offered by senior leaders who are responsible for teaching and guiding those who are now disciples of Jesus. We saw that leaders of churches are themselves shaped by their privilege and power, and that their failure to notice those who are embodied in different ways - and most crucially their experiences of the world - which can undermine their ministry. On the other hand, we also saw signs of listening, critical reflection and a willingness to engage in a process of unlearning and relearning in the formation of individuals as well as community. We saw that those who enjoy privilege on the basis of their inhabiting the world in white bodies can remain inattentive to the matters of embodiment, power and disempowerment, particularly as they relate to those who inhabit the world in black bodies. This inattentiveness to embodiment, is outworked in a partly disembodied spirituality and theologies which do not engage with the reality of human experience. However, those progressive pentecostals whose bodies sense both the presence of the Holy Spirit *and* the burdens of racism and racial trauma, critical theological reflection is crucial to their spiritual lives, faith and leadership.

Critical reflection on the reality of progressive pentecostalism is crucial to avoid the hypocrisy seen in the early movement in which judgment was meted out against the politics

of 'the world' but not often the politics of the church [3.2.4]. Yet while we have acknowledged the positive signs of body politics being recognised and integrated into pentecostal spirituality and theology (at least in the matter of race), the question of how this attentiveness to embodiment translates into and impacts upon public action remains. In this section I will draw on the examples of pentecostal leaders whose own embodiment identifies them as those often victimised on the basis of race and sometimes gender in a society indelibly shaped and dominated by white patriarchy. It is these leaders who I argue, are leading the kinds of social and political engagement which are effectively reaching those most in need (and often the hardest to reach for public services) and addressing their plight in interpersonal, institutional and structural ways.⁵⁹²

In this section I will draw out some of the core perspectives in the thought and action of the community leaders I interviewed. For the most part we will see that there is an overarching integralism in their worldview, and a particular openness to the Spirit's work in and through unexpected people and places. Firstly, we will see that these progressive leaders are able to integrate aspects of their pre-conversion life experience - often shaped by socio-economic (including racial and gender-based) struggle - with their sense of vocation after conversion. Secondly, we will observe that they view themselves as co-labourers with God in the work of a holistic Gospel rather than a Gospel which is individualised and focused solely on piety. Thirdly, they are willing to draw on sources of truth beyond the bible in order to better understand their social and political context and thus discern the specifics of the mission. Finally, they are able to recognise a common humanity with those of other faiths and demonstrate solidarity with marginalised religious groups.

⁵⁹² Wolfgang Vondey, "The Impact of Culture and Social Justice on Christian Formation in Pentecostalism," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 24, no. 2 (2015): 204, 207.

6.2.1 The Spirit Calling: Integrating Experience and Vocation

In the telling of their personal stories of conversion and vocation, these leaders held together both a sense of continuation and one of rupture in which their personal history - including experiences of socio-economic and racial disadvantage - was not erased through the transforming act of God's salvation but redeemed. The discernment of a calling to a specific aspect of mission or ministry, was often tied to reflections on their own journey of conversion in which God is understood to have transformed their lives in holistic ways not solely in the purely religious or spiritual sense. In other words, they openly practice the 'hermeneutics of experience' in which they seek to reflect on their own experiences in light of how they understand God and the world.⁵⁹³

Interviewees expressed a clear sense that God was present in their lives before their conversions and that their life experiences have formed in them particular perspectives and skills which are now core to their ministry.⁵⁹⁴ Their experiences whether good or bad, are seen as materials from which God has made them who they are and prepared them for particular roles in the world. Rachel, who lives in a major city with high levels of social deprivation, spoke about being led to work with young offenders through her own experience of having friends who engaged in criminal activity:

'...a lot of my friends were troublesome on the roads used to sell drugs and stuff that, but I saw their heart, but I felt that everybody else judged them and I saw the way the police treated them and everything, so I said ultimately I just want to work with them because I feel like I understand them.'⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁹³ Yong, *Word-Spirit-Community*, 245-246.

⁵⁹⁴ Interview, Pastor Dez Brown, February 2019; Interview, Mrs Titilayo Oluwatudimu, February 2019; Interview Rachel, February 2019; Interview, David, February 2019; Interview, Rev Robin Thompson, July 2019; Interview, Rev Dr Carver Anderson, July 2019; For a discussion of this integration of life experience and calling for ordained leaders see Richard N. Pitt and Stephen Behnke, *Divine Callings: Understanding the Call to Ministry in Black Pentecostalism* (New York: New York University Press, 2012) 52-3.

⁵⁹⁵ Interview, Rachel, February 2019.

Similarly connecting his past experience with his vocation, Bishop Llewellyn at the NUCHA spoke about being raised by his Jamaican grandmother as a key factor in him feeling called to respond to the needs of elderly people who were being discriminated against.⁵⁹⁶ Mrs Oluwatudimu described her own experience of being converted at a school in Nigeria and being abandoned by her family, as a motivator for developing a school in the UK in which children can grow and be nurtured holistically.⁵⁹⁷ Dez spoke of his involvement in criminal activity before conversion and then serving a prison sentence after conversion, as shaping his journey to founding *Spark2Life* which serves young people at risk of involvement in crime and those attempting to rehabilitate into society after serving a prison sentence.⁵⁹⁸ Rev Carmel Jones explained that his founding of the credit union was motivated by experiences of discrimination by banks and the lack of access to funding to purchase church buildings.⁵⁹⁹ In each of these cases, the connections being made between personal experiences of socio-economic deprivation and discrimination and the call to public ministry, testify to a broadening of pentecostal imagination regarding what aspects of human life have sacred potential. The new life they have been called to in Christ does not mean forgetting their past or what they have experienced, including (even especially) the painful aspects of their stories. On the contrary, difficulty, discrimination and trauma is remembered and integrated into a story of redemption and particularly through a calling to mission.⁶⁰⁰

If calling among some pentecostals involves both the 'vertical call' (command) from

⁵⁹⁶ Interview, Bishop Llewellyn Graham, July 2019.

⁵⁹⁷ Interview, Mrs Titilayo Oluwatudimu, February 2019.

⁵⁹⁸ "Dez's Story", Spark2Life, accessed September 23, 2020, <https://spark2life.co.uk/our-founder/dezs-story/>

⁵⁹⁹ Marcia Dixon, "Rev Carmel Jones," Keep the Faith, accessed September 4, 2020, <https://www.keepthefaitth.co.uk/2018/07/05/rev-carmel-jones-by-marcia-dixon/>

⁶⁰⁰ Kay, *Pentecostalism in Britain*, 164, 167.

God and the 'horizontal call' from human beings, then the progressives we are discussing here, sometimes have a broader and more integrated understanding of calling.⁶⁰¹ While some did speak directly about God calling them in a 'vertical sense', none gave the impression that their activities were dependent upon direct specific instructions – either through a prophetic word or biblical imperative - to address a particular issue (although this does happen).⁶⁰² Nor did interviewees talk about their calling as related to a purely cognitive 'critical consciousness' developed through analysis of data on issues or structures (although this might be considered an aspect of a 'horizontal call' which confirms human need).⁶⁰³ As we have seen above, calling was stirred up through attentiveness to one's own experiences of injustice as well as those of others and the conviction about what needed to be changed. For Bishop Llewellyn it was his proximity to his grandmother and awareness of the needs of the elderly black people without housing, for Rachel it was being friends with disenfranchised young people, for Mrs Oluwatudimu it was personally knowing the trauma that can accompany childhood. The 'vertical call' then, is discerned through attentiveness to the 'horizontal call', and even through the awareness to an internal call rooted in one's own awareness of one's personal story. This understanding of calling, which was apparent in interviews, though not stated explicitly, could be described as: a stirring of the human person by the Holy Spirit, as they inhabit the world and attend to their own experiences as well as those of others and particularly those who are underprivileged. This calling is the awakening of the consciousness that is at once spiritual, personal and political. It is particularly poignant (but is not exclusive) for those who inhabit the world in bodies which

⁶⁰¹ Pitt and Behnke, *Divine Callings*, 42.

⁶⁰² See Pitt and Behnke, *Divine Callings*, 54-61.

⁶⁰³ Chism, "The Saints Go Marching," 442.

are racialised, gendered or classed in ways which put them at a disadvantage.

The connections between personal history and sense of calling should not be overemphasised to suggest that God only calls pentecostals (or Christians in general), to address the issues of which they have personal experience. It is clear that the sometimes-difficult pasts of the individuals I interviewed, were redeemed as interviewees looked back and see how they were formed through those experiences and how their ministry is sharpened through them. However, it is not always the case that those who are deeply engaged with particular issues, do so on the basis of personal experience. In the words of Pastor Doug, those who have personal experience 'have really just been given head start, it isn't that other people shouldn't have that as their agenda'.⁶⁰⁴ It is to the question of progressive pentecostal agendas that we will turn to next.

6.2.2 Co-labouring with God: The Nature of Divine-Human Action

For the progressive pentecostal community leaders I interviewed, there was a common understanding that they are working together with God as co-labourers in their ministry of justice and love. The call to attend to and respond to the realities of poverty and socio-economic inequality as felt by the poorest, is to hear the voice of God and work alongside the Spirit. Rather than juxtaposing the activity of God and their own activity, they see their work as intertwined with God's work in the world even though their role is different speaking in terms of their participation in the 'missio dei'.⁶⁰⁵ Joshua Reichard explains that pentecostal concursus (belief about divine-human action) must be founded upon Spirit-baptism, to become an 'action-oriented vision of the Spirit at work through humanity'.⁶⁰⁶

⁶⁰⁴ Interview, Pastor Doug Williams, February 2019.

⁶⁰⁵ Interview, Pastor Anthony Hodgkinson, February 2019; Interview, Rev Dr Carver Anderson, July 2019.

⁶⁰⁶ Joshua D. Reichard, "Toward A Pentecostal Theology of Concursus," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 22, no.1 (2013): 95-114, 104.

Rather than imagining the Spirit as one who acts through a person in ways beyond their control (prior concursus),⁶⁰⁷ I would argue that progressive pentecostals recognise the Spirit as one who prompts or directs the human will (sequenced concursus) or simply enables the human to make their own choices regarding social engagement (permissive concursus).⁶⁰⁸ In either case they recognise that the Spirit empowers and guides them, but their efforts must also be involved in order to see social and political change.

We see elements of both perspectives in the stories told about why and how these pentecostal progressives began their social ministries. Rev Carmel Jones exemplifies the 'sequential concursus position' when he describes the founding of the PCU as 'our exploits led by the Lord' and speaks of 'divine sanction' to start the PCU.⁶⁰⁹ In this sense, God is understood as the initiator and leader of the work, as well as the one who affirms it. However, God is not the one who undertakes the work itself in a way that removes the agency of Rev Jones. On the other hand, we see an example of 'permissive concursus' where Rev Dr Anderson speaks not about direct instruction or leading of the Spirit, but about having a 'concept' and Rev Thompson having a 'vision' which together then birthed the organisation *Bringing Hope*.⁶¹⁰ This absence of an explicit naming of God as the initiator should not be read as a denial of God's activity in their work. Rev Dr Anderson spoke about their work 'at the deepest level on the streets' where they ensure 'the power of Jesus Christ' and 'manifested power of the Holy Spirit' are at the forefront.⁶¹¹ However, it could be read instead as indicating an instinctive integration of the Spirit's presence and activity with

⁶⁰⁷ Reichard, "Towards A Pentecostal Theology of Consensus," 97-8.

⁶⁰⁸ Reichard, "Towards Pentecostal Theology of Consensus," 99, 101.

⁶⁰⁹ Jones, "Autobiography of my life," from age 11 to 80," 13.

⁶¹⁰ Interview, Rev Dr Carver Anderson, July 2019.

⁶¹¹ Interview, Rev Dr Carver Anderson, July 2019.

that of believers filled with the Spirit who feel led to take particular action.

Reichard goes on to explain that cooperation between the human will and the Holy Spirit is crucial to the intermingling of divine and human action, the outcome being that the individual is empowered through 'active participation and appropriation.'⁶¹² A staff member at Spark2Life modelled this as he shared the 'parable of the sower' and drew connections to their work at the charity, drawing on the biblical language.⁶¹³ He characterised their work as 'sowing seeds' while hoping they land on 'good soil'.⁶¹⁴ He went on to speak about the need for them to persevere with the young people they work with despite setbacks which he compared to the 'heat that scorches' the seeds.⁶¹⁵ Dez then elaborated on the metaphor, speaking about the hard work required to till the ground and prepare it for the seeds 'removing the rocks, turning soil etc' relating this to their own need to offer their best efforts in both prayer and persistent action.⁶¹⁶ There is both the recognition the human beings must actively participate, but that they must also 'appropriate' the power of God through prayer, in order to ensure that they see the fruit.⁶¹⁷ Ultimately, Dez says, 'you have to trust that God will bring a return.'⁶¹⁸ What came through quite strongly in this instance was an awareness of both the potential and the limitations of human action, which is held within the ultimate sovereignty of God. This perspective on human action means Dez does not depend wholly on his own plans and strategies. Yet he also avoids the kind of triumphalism in which he expects his work to be easy because of God's presence with them. The narrative at

⁶¹² Reichard, "Towards A Pentecostal Theology of Consensus," 106.

⁶¹³ Matthew 13:1-9.

⁶¹⁴ Observation, Spark2Life, February 2019.

⁶¹⁵ Observation, Spark2Life, February 2019.

⁶¹⁶ Observation, Spark2Life, February 2019.

⁶¹⁷ This is what Reichard calls 'reactive' concursus or a conception of the divine-human relationship as one in which God reacts to the requests, piety, worship, or prayer of human beings. Pentecostals operationalize concursus in such a way as to indicate that God's action and intervention is in response to human action.' Reichard, "Towards A Pentecostal Theology of Consensus," 107.

⁶¹⁸ Observation, Spark2Life, February 2019.

Spark2Life exemplifies the ‘complex, intrinsic interaction’ that is inherent to pentecostal concursus, meaning it ‘cannot be reduced to causal mechanisms either by God or by a human agent.’⁶¹⁹ The complexity of the connections between divine and human agency, generates a synergy for pentecostals, which allows them to draw on God’s power as well as making full use of their own. It is in this framework that progressive pentecostals act in response to the stirring of the Spirit, as well as in response to their own experience and the needs of those around them as we have seen in section 6.2.1.

6.2.3 Integrating ‘Secular’ Knowledge

So far we have seen that progressive pentecostal leaders working in communities are inspired by a range of influences to address the needs of the vulnerable around them. They demonstrate an integrated understanding of their lives and their callings, and they recognise the intermingled nature of divine-human action. The third perspective that came up frequently in dialogue with these progressive leaders, was their willingness to learn from, accept and integrate ‘secular’ forms of knowledge as they sought to understand the world they inhabited. Attentiveness to embodiment and the matters of power, is developed as progressives attend not only to the diverse personal testimonies of those who inhabit the world in diverse bodies, but as they draw on knowledge that will allow them to understand the trends and structures that create those realities. This, I would argue is an example of the ‘pentecostal critical awareness’ Chism highlights in his work, or the ‘conscientisation’ that Johns calls us to in her’s.⁶²⁰

⁶¹⁹ Reichard, “Towards A Pentecostal Theology of Consensus,” 112; Enoch S. Charles, “Divine Moral Assistance and Modern Science: Kantian Ethics in Dialogue with Pentecostal Participatory Ontology and Theology of Divine Action,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 26, no.2 (2017): 214-232.

⁶²⁰ Chism, “The Saints Go Marching,” 442; Cheryl Bridges Johns, *Pentecostal formation: a pedagogy among the oppressed* 2nd ed (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2010) 109-10.

For the early classical pentecostals as we have seen, the scriptures were recognised as offering the only necessary perspective on human life and experience [3.2]. However, for progressive pentecostals, the process of discerning what God is saying and how they must respond involves drawing on non-scriptural sources and wisdom drawn from the data and strategies of 'the world'. The scriptures remain central to divine revelation, and yet there is a recognition in practice – even if this not declared – that the Bible is not sufficient in and of itself, to fully understand the world in which they seek to minister. Instead, social science research, government policy documents and other forms of data are considered essential to the task of developing Christian mission. These resources become crucial for pentecostal formation as disciples seek to know how they might follow Christ, and what the Spirit is leading them to do. The Spirit of truth is understood to lead pentecostals to wherever truth may be. If Yong imagines that the Spirit's leading 'into all truth' includes leading to 'new significations and appropriations of the truth' then in the case of progressives, the Spirit also leads into new and truer (in terms of more integral) action.⁶²¹ In telling the story of the PCU's creation, Rev Carmel Jones explains that he saw an article in *The Sun* newspaper headed "Who can start a Credit Union?" and upon reading it he says 'I soon found it was something I had been praying about for many years.'⁶²² His daughter Elaine Bowes also recalls that he was inspired by the black power and civil rights movements in the USA to work towards black self-determination in Britain.⁶²³ Despite Rev Jones' many prayers and his reading of the scriptures which undoubtedly accompanied them, he found the specific answer to what he must do in a newspaper and he declares this openly in his memoirs.⁶²⁴

⁶²¹ Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 223.

⁶²² Carmel Jones, "Autobiography" 23.

⁶²³ Interview, Elaine Bowes, June 2019.

⁶²⁴ Carmel Jones, "Autobiography" 23.

Rev Jones models an openness to the voice of the Spirit speaking to him through this newspaper article (a 'secular' source) and also through the black power movement (deemed by some to be an unchristian movement).⁶²⁵ This openness to strategies or ideas which are not from Christian religious sources testifies to an expanded understanding of what God might use to inspire and guide his people. Within this perspective, a broader range of sources has the potential to be used as material for divine purposes.

Progressive pentecostals are motivated by a search for answers to some of the significant social problems that they encounter, to look beyond the 'spiritual' knowledge in the scriptures and the church. There is a recognition, even if not stated overtly, that they need more than the scriptures to understand the world and how they should act within it. Tony Lee Ritchie asserts that pentecostals need the assistance of Christian realism (specifically Niebuhr's understanding of Christian realism) to expand its parameters to enable 'more precise social and political implementation'.⁶²⁶ Yet the progressive pentecostal commitment to seeing the world as it really is (with the help of the Spirit's guidance) and to engaging in pragmatic tactics to change their communities, is a sign of what might be called a 'pneumatic Christian realism'. For the progressive leaders I have met, understanding the world as it is involves accessing data and statistics concerning the plight of groups they serve, analysing the individual and institutional powers at play, and exploring which strategies maybe successful. Peter Lewis, the headteacher at ECS, spoke about the 'correlation between disadvantage and poor attainment/access to higher education 'and his passion to 'overcome those barriers'.⁶²⁷ Rachel at Spark2Life spoke in detail about the data

⁶²⁵ James Cone, *Black Theology ad Black Power* (Maryknoll: Orbis, Books, 1989) 1-2.

⁶²⁶ Ritchie, "Pragmatism, Power, and Politics, 243.

⁶²⁷ Interview, Peter Lewis, February 2019.

on young offenders and the wider systemic failings, recognising the need to ‘put systems in place’ to safeguard ‘at risk’ young people.⁶²⁸ Rev Dr Anderson spoke about the importance in his work of recognising ‘policies, practices, perspectives, ideologies and philosophical nuances’, that affect the lives of individuals and families.⁶²⁹ Bishop Powell at the NUCHA described the process of conducting a local survey in order to gather the data to build their case that the local government was failing in its duty of care in regards to housing.⁶³⁰ The mission of God, in all of these cases, and the work of the Spirit, depends upon the gathering of knowledge and instruction from non-biblical sources and cooperation with ‘secular’ agencies. In this manner all things are caught up with the work of God and the move of the Spirit.

Progressives are not hopeless in their realism; empowered by the Spirit they acknowledge the reality of how the world is, while maintaining an expectation of the Spirit’s transforming work. The Spirit reveals truth in all kinds of places, not only through the Word of God, but through the words of social scientists, policy documents and legal experts, those at work in the ‘secular’ which is recognised by progressives as a space where the Spirit also moves. Progressives share Nimi Wariboko’s vision of the ‘charismatic city’ described as:

‘...a space of new beginnings, new thinking, new energies...a place of gifts (*charis*) and charisma...a network of energy flows that is initiating something new amid an ongoing social reality...(a) place where events happen that exceed the conditions of possibility understood in advance by its agents.’⁶³¹

In their openness to learning and their transcending of church-world, sacred-secular dualisms, the progressives we are exploring exhibit a willingness to cultivate this ‘new

⁶²⁸ Interview, Rachel, February 2019.

⁶²⁹ Interview, Rev Dr Carver Anderson, July 2019.

⁶³⁰ Interview, Bishop Wilton Powell, July 2019.

⁶³¹ Wariboko, *The Charismatic City*, xvi.

thinking' and to take their place among the flow of Spirit-energy which is bringing forth something new even in the midst of the 'ongoing social reality.'

6.2.4 Performing Inclusivity: Interfaith Ministry

If engagement with non-theological disciplines and non-biblical sources allows progressives to better understand the world we inhabit, and the diversity of human experiences then what might this mean for engagement with those of other faiths? For classical pentecostals concerned primarily with their own salvation and the conversion of non-believers, relationships with those of other faiths have been fraught with tensions.⁶³² Progressive pentecostals maintain a conviction that they must share the Gospel in the hope that non-believers will be converted to faith in Jesus Christ, but they hold this together with a concern for the well-being of the person in the here and now. In some cases, social engagement (though good on its own) is part of the strategy to build the kind of relationships which might allow for the Gospel to be shared in a more relational way.⁶³³ As Pastor Anthony stated: 'we still believe in heaven and hell, but we just believe it's easier for people to listen to a sermon on heaven and hell when you're in their world instead of asking always to come

⁶³² This is what I consider to be the general reality for many classical pentecostal believers, although scholarship has engaged in constructive discussion of pentecostalism in relation with other faiths, which do not centre on conversion. Pentecostal Theology of Religions and reflections on interfaith ministry have continued to develop for over 20 years led primarily by Amos Yong in his works *Discerning of the Spirit(s): A Pentecostal-Charismatic Contribution to Christian Theology of Religions* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); *Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003) and *Hospitality and the Other* (New York: Orbis Books, 2008). Yong points to the preceding work of Samuel Solivan "Interreligious Dialogue: An Hispanic American Pentecostal Perspective" in *Grounds for Understanding: Ecumenical Responses to Religious Pluralism*, ed. S. Mark Heim (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans) 37-45 and Frank Macchia, "The Secular and Religious under the Shadow of the Cross: Implications in Blumhardt's Kingdom Spirituality for a Christian response to World Religions" in *Religion in a Secular City: Essays in Honour of Harvey Cox*, ed. Arvind Sharma (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001) 59-77. See also Veli-Matti Karkkainen, "Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions: A Pentecostal-Charismatic Inquiry," *International Review of Mission*, 04, (2002): 187-198; Tony Richie, "Translating Pentecostal Testimony into Interreligious Dialogue," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 20, no.1 (2011): 155-183.

⁶³³ For a discussion of British church social engagement and proselytism see Paul Bickley, *The Problem of Proselytism* (London: Theos, 2015).

into your world.’⁶³⁴ This should not be read in a way which detracts from the genuineness of their concern for the practical needs of their community. For leaders like Pastor Anthony, there is a recognition that their responsibility to their community is holistic; it is spiritual as well as practical, preparing for eternity not just addressing temporal needs. Progressives are able to faithfully meet the needs of people of other faiths regardless of whether they get to share the Gospel with them and see them converted. However, the majority will always carry a hope that they might play a role in preventing another person from going to hell, the fate they believe, of those who do not accept the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

A story shared by Rev Dr Anderson of *Bringing Hope* illustrates the creative way in which progressive pentecostals can overcome the barriers that can exist between them and those of other faiths, by attending to their common humanity. *Bringing Hope* serves men from a range of ethnic and religious backgrounds, who are at risk of involvement or already involved in serious crime and so in many cases Rev Dr Anderson and Rev Thompson are asked to conduct funerals. Rev Dr Anderson explained that on one occasion he was asked to conduct a funeral for a Muslim young man, which was a new experience for him as a Christian minister:

‘I asked God, ‘how do you want to deal with this because a lot of them there are Muslims?’ They understand David and the 23rd Psalm, The Lord is my shepherd, so I literally did a cross connexion between the biblical narrative of David and Quranic narratives, to be able to relate to their context.’⁶³⁵

This may not seem like a significant choice, but when we consider the sectarianism which has indelibly shaped classical pentecostalism, this is an important case to explore. The overarching indication is that a commitment to public action to address the needs of those

⁶³⁴ Interview, Pastor Anthony Hodgkinson, February 2019.

⁶³⁵ Interview, Rev Dr Carver Anderson, July 2019.

marginalised in society, allows for relationships of understanding and respect to grow across lines of religious difference. Rev Dr Anderson does not deny or downplay his own faith in order to appeal to others but chooses to emphasise the ‘continuity rather than the discontinuity’ between his own religious tradition and that of the Muslim family he is serving.⁶³⁶ In this way he embodies the ‘contextual missiology’ Yong describes by engaging in dialogue about faith and God, ‘vis-à-vis other religious figures, other religious communities and other faiths.’⁶³⁷

We should not consider this to be a trend within progressive pentecostalism (I consider Rev Anderson to represent a minority perspective here) and many progressives would consider his approach to this funeral to be a missed opportunity for evangelism. However, this pastoral approach to the funeral of a black Muslim man, in the midst of a racist and Islamophobic context, offers us some important implications for what progressive pentecostal ministry might become in Britain. In the UK, as in many places in the West, Muslim communities have faced increased hostility, discrimination and violence since the terrorist attacks in the USA on September 11, 2001.⁶³⁸ Hate crimes against Muslims have increased in England in the time preceding and following the Brexit referendum, forcing them to deal with the intersectional problem of being often black or brown *and* Muslim in a society which we have already acknowledged as deeply formed by racism and Islamophobia.⁶³⁹ While Rev Anderson and Rev Thompson are both black men, serving mainly black men, their Christian faith offers them a kind of privilege and power, in contrast to the

⁶³⁶ Yong, *Hospitality and the Other*, 77

⁶³⁷ Yong, *Hospitality and the Other*, 77.

⁶³⁸ Yong, *Hospitality and the Other*, 1-2.

⁶³⁹ Viren Swami, David Barron, Laura Weis and Adrian Furnham, “To Brexit or not to Brexit: The roles of Islamophobia, conspiracist beliefs, and integrated threat in voting intentions for the United Kingdom European Union membership referendum,” *The British Journal of Psychology*, 109, no.1 (2018): 156-179; Shamim Miah, “Brexit and Muslims in Postnormal Times,” *Third Text* 32, no.5-6 (2018): 632-637.

Muslim faith of their counterparts which further adds to their marginalisation. In choosing not to distance his Christian faith from Islam, but to emphasise the connections, he demonstrates solidarity on the basis of their shared experiences of social and political marginalisation.

As I have stated, this is an exceptional occurrence rather than being representative, and nor is this pastoral approach to interfaith relationships unique to pentecostals. But what I have wanted to make clear, is that when progressive pentecostals cultivate a critical consciousness, in which they recognise the politics of the body, it allows them to more clearly recognise the different group who suffer and are in need the solidarity. Rev Dr Anderson did not make connections between his pastoral choice and the realities of Islamophobia, but it strikes me as significant that he instinctively chooses solidarity over sectarianism and saw no conflict whatsoever in this approach. It indicates how organic and genuine this kind of solidarity can be, when there is rootedness in communities and an openness and proximity to those who are different. Though a minority perspective, it seems that this approach will only increase in importance in the UK and in places like the US which are increasingly diverse in spiritual and religious terms, and also continually hostile to diversity in many respects.

6.3 Male Power and the Capacity for Women's Flourishing

We have seen in this chapter so far that progressive pentecostals model holistic discipleship insofar as they are both filled by and attentive to the Holy Spirit and critically aware of the matters of embodiment and injustice. It is through this integration of spirituality with the full life of the body, that pentecostal theology and ministry is equipped to address the full

diversity of human experience through mission that includes justice and solidarity. Yet our focus has been mainly on the matters of socio-economic inequality and race in the preceding sections, and so now we will turn to the matter of gender. As in the case of race, we will not look solely to interpersonal relationships in order to understand pentecostal critical awareness regarding the capacity for women's flourishing, instead, we will assess the dynamics of male power and interests within progressive pentecostal spaces. I will show that despite the willingness of progressives to address the problems of poverty and (sometimes) racism, patriarchy eludes critique. Women continue to have secondary status even within progressive pentecostal churches, though this has not dampened women's leadership, which thrives in the wider community. However, community engagement which is led by men often focuses on male interests despite their claims to be serving the entire community. For progressives, their 'progressivism' depends upon their attentiveness to women's needs and their willingness to make room for women's (as opposed to solely wives') leadership within pentecostal churches and organisations.

6.3.1 Male Power and Women's Participation in the Progressive Pentecostal Church

The high proportion of women attending, volunteering and financially supporting classical pentecostal churches in Britain is well known and well documented as we have seen.⁶⁴⁰ As with many other Christian traditions and religions, women are the ones whose prayers and (often unpaid) labour enable pentecostal churches to exist and thrive. As Cheryl Townsend Gilkes observes: 'If it wasn't for the women...'⁶⁴¹ However, progressive pentecostal churches are consistent with wider classical pentecostalism which - as we have seen in 4.2.3.3 - has not adopted inclusive theologies or practices in regard to the place of women particularly in

⁶⁴⁰ Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 225-7; Foster, "Women and the Inverted Pyramid," 45-68.

⁶⁴¹ Gilkes, "If it wasn't for the women," 26.

church leadership. In other words, when it comes to the matter of embodiment and gender, even progressive pentecostals who are concerned for social justice in the wider community, fail to recognise the privileging of male bodies, or to acknowledge this as a matter of injustice that must be rectified.

The churches which I have studied as examples of progressive pentecostalism have on the whole maintained the early pentecostal openness to women's ministry particularly preaching. Women preachers featured at all three of the churches I analysed despite there being ample space for improvement in terms of the balance of voices which are heard in these churches. In reviewing the sermons delivered on a Sunday morning to the whole congregation over the course of a year, the ratio of men to women is overwhelming imbalanced in favour of male preachers: at Church One the ration was 51:5, at Church Two it was 54:3 and at ECCi it was slightly better but nowhere near equal at 39:8.⁶⁴² We have already established that preaching, as the main tool of teaching and forming the faith and discipleship of those in the congregation, holds great power. For this power to be held overwhelmingly by men, means that male perspectives, interests and experiences are prioritised. This plays out in terms of theological hermeneutics, leading to the reinforcement of patriarchal biblical perspectives due to the absence of feminist and womanist contributions as Delores Williams explains:

'...the Christian womanist theologian (or preacher) can refocus the salvation story so that it emphasises the beginning of revelation with the spirit mounting Mary, a woman of the poor... Such an interpretation of revelation has roots in 19th century black abolitionist and feminist Sojourner Truth. Posing an important question and a response she refuted a white (male) preacher's claim that women could not have equal rights to men's because Christ was not a woman. Truth asked 'Whar did your Christ come from?...From God and a woman! Man had nothin' to do with him!'⁶⁴³

⁶⁴² Church Podcasts, July 2017 - September 2018, accessed October 3-5, 2019.

⁶⁴³ Delores Williams, "Womanist Theology: Black Women's Voices," in *The Womanist Reader*, ed. Phillips, 122.

The absence of women's theological perspectives within churches which are predominantly women is problematic for their own discipleship, as well as for the men, who themselves are not challenged to reconsider the ways in which their perspectives and actions make them complicit in women's subjugation. The constant visibility of men in the role of preacher over and against women reinforces the messages from wider society which socialises all people to view men as superior in terms of rationality and capacity for leadership. The reinforcement of these norms and perspectives by the spiritual community results in a sanctification of patriarchal norms through which the elevation of masculinity and male voices is deemed natural, right and godly.

The problem of power and gender in progressive pentecostal churches is not just about the proportion of preaching, but about the particular women who get to preach. At ECCi a range of different women preached, all of whom were less experienced than the senior male pastors, suggesting that there is an openness in terms of creating opportunity for different women to develop as preachers.⁶⁴⁴ A continuation of such a strategy would mean that in the subsequent years, ECCi would have cohort of women preachers who have built the confidence and skills to preach well, and opportunities may increase as they improve in their gifts. The matter of opportunity for women's ministry development is crucial to any church seeking to be considered a space for women's flourishing. On the other hand, at Church One and Church Two the few opportunities to preach that are given to women, were in fact given to one woman, the senior leader who is the wife of the senior pastor. So, while we may commend the openness to women's preaching and leadership in Church One and Two, in reality this is restricted to one woman, and cannot therefore be

⁶⁴⁴ ECCi Church Podcast, accessed October 3, 2019.

considered to be a sign of progress for all women.

The problem of leadership couples for women's leadership in general is an important matter to consider in discussion of gender and power. The formal recognition of women as leaders is something to be celebrated as a shift forward from pentecostal women being recognised in 'ministry' but not 'governance.'⁶⁴⁵ However analysing *how* women arrive at positions of power is essential to our exploration of the extent to which women are flourishing with progressive pentecostal churches. Victor Agadjanian suggests that women in pentecostal churches often benefit from a 'quasi-formal leadership'⁶⁴⁶ which comes through association with their husbands who have formal leadership posts. There are resonances of this within the progressive pentecostal churches we are examining, though not a direct correlation. Church One and Church Two are led by couples but the women do have official positions as they are also named 'senior pastor' so in this case they do not confirm to Agadjanian's supposition.⁶⁴⁷ However in both cases, these women are not ordained as their husbands are, nor do they have the primary leadership experience of their husbands. We can determine that any other woman with this lack of formally recognised qualification, would not attain such a position. This would suggest that while they may indeed have the capacity to lead, their marriage has been a crucial factor in them gaining their positions. On the one hand, we might celebrate this as progress for these individual women, whose husbands recognise their leadership and have used their privilege in order to make room for their wives. However, this privilege does not extend to other women in

⁶⁴⁵ Charles H. Barfoot and Gerald T. Sheppard, "Prophetic vs. Priestly Religion: The Changing Role of Women Clergy in Classical Pentecostal Churches," *Review of Religious Research* 22, no. 1 (1980): 2-17; Stephenson, "Prophecy Women and Ruling Men," 410-426.

⁶⁴⁶ Victor Agadjanian, "Women's Religious Authority in a Sub-Saharan Setting: Dialectics of Empowerment and Dependency," *Gender & Society* 29, no. 6 (December 2015): 982-1008.

⁶⁴⁷ Church podcasts, accessed October 3-5, 2019; Church Websites, accessed September 27, 2020.

either of these churches, who have no access to the pulpit or other positions of power. This leaves us with a crucial question about the extent to which avenues for leadership are transparent for all women. The leadership couple model risks making leadership inaccessible for women who are not married to the senior pastor but have leadership potential, and for women who may be called to leadership in the church but married to men who are not - as has been seen in some cases historically.⁶⁴⁸ We can therefore conclude that while these churches may be spaces of flourishing for certain *wives*, they are not spaces of flourishing for all *women*.

It is clear from this analysis that the question of power and gender is an ongoing issue for progressive pentecostals who are still impacted by patriarchal norms and systems. Even where there is an openness to women's voices and leadership, this too often comes via male sponsorship and thus excludes women who fall outside of certain relational networks. The integrity of congregations, in this regard, rests upon the extent to which women of their own accord and gifting, can be recognised and serve in any position and at any level within a congregation's life. This is not yet the case.

6.3.2 Places of Honour: Leading as Community Mothers and Sisters

In 1 Corinthians 12:24, Paul writes that God has 'has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it 'and from what we have seen so far, it is clearly the women in churches who are those who lack honour. However as Paul suggests, this does not mean those with lesser honour remain dishonoured entirely. For progressive pentecostal women, their leadership is not left frustrated on all accounts but often finds

⁶⁴⁸ Gastón Espinosa, "Third Class Soldiers" A History of Hispanic Pentecostal Clergywomen in the Assemblies of God," in *Philip's Daughters*, eds, Alexander and Yong, 95-111; and Frederick L. Ware, "Spiritual Egalitarianism, Ecclesial Pragmatism, and the Status of Women in Ordained Ministry" in *Philip's Daughters*, eds, Alexander and Yong, 215-234.

space outside of the church walls as they serve their communities.

In discussing progressive pentecostalism globally, Miller and Yamamori have emphasised the place of women as 'community-building entrepreneurs' in contexts such as Johannesburg, South Africa where they are commonly victimised.⁶⁴⁹ While some churches have not always have given women room to lead in all the ways they may feel called, women's ministry to the most vulnerable in the wider community has had significant impact.⁶⁵⁰ By acknowledging the 'progressive stream' of pentecostalism, Miller and Yamamori are formally recognising the work that women have often been doing unnoticed because it has not taken place in churches, the institutions which are often limited by male power. Women have found their space to work within the wider community where the needs are great and the concerns about the gender of those leading have been insignificant.⁶⁵¹ The same can be said for progressives in Britain, where pentecostal women - though facing discrimination in churches - flourish as leaders through social engagement as seen in the case of Mrs Titilayo Oluwatudimu from ECS and Rachel from *Spark2Life*.

The role of the 'church mother' been highlighted as a means by which women may exercise leadership in classical pentecostal churches as Toulis explains:

'In the NTCG... domestic tasks, social reproduction and socialization are vested in the one role of Mother of the Church. Her function is to look after male and female brethren and ensure that doctrine is upheld: If she looks around and sees a young or mature person acting contrary ... it is her duty to admonish, advise, talk with them, not talk down, in a friendly motherly way ... like a mother would talk to her son or her daughter ... give direction...If two members have a disagreement, a Mother will try to settle it... When a member has a minor financial crisis, a Mother may help out with money from her own pocket. Mothers are also responsible for the care of visiting members and ministers, ensuring that they have a place to stay and are well fed. They

⁶⁴⁹ Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 75-79.

⁶⁵⁰ Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 208; Karen Kossie-Chernyshev, "Looking Beyond the Pulpit Social Ministries and African American Pentecostal-Charismatic Women in Leadership," in *Philip's Daughters*, eds, Alexander and Yong, 61-73.

⁶⁵¹ Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 209.

also make sure that the church hall is kept neat and clean.⁶⁵²

The 'church mother' role is both spiritual and practical and it involves addressing both the practicalities of church life and the personal needs of members of the congregation. Yet for progressives, we might also highlight the role women fulfil as 'community mothers.' While Gilkes speaks of 'church mother' and 'community mother' as distinct roles taking place in the distinct spheres of the 'sacred' and the 'secular,'⁶⁵³ I see the community mother role held by pentecostal women such as Mrs Oluwatudimu as transcending such a binary. The community mother role is also spiritual and practical, both relating to the needs of the institution and to the personal needs, the role is not only ecclesial but public; she serves members of the community at large not solely church members. This role may be considered a 'womanist method of social transformation' in that it is rooted in black women's everyday experiences (i.e. that of mother) and yet serves wider community needs.⁶⁵⁴ We see this modelled in the ministry of Mrs Oluwatudimu who felt called to be a missionary to Europe, making use of her skills as an educator and builder of community.⁶⁵⁵ It is in Walthamstow, London where she has found her place of ministry, and proposed plans for the establishment of ECS which took several years to finalise. She is now officially the Director of Education but serves children, parents and her colleagues in innumerable ways, offering what she called 'wrap around care' as she explains:

'A number of our children come from really challenging backgrounds. When I did my headship training I trained specifically to work in inner city challenging schools....so the children we have face...poverty, foster care, unstable home lives...We clothe children, feed them...because the parents cannot afford to clothe them... It is part of the ministry... We provide parenting courses, because they are our little sisters, so we need to help them to be able to provide for those children... Some of them are children raising children... We teach the children

⁶⁵² Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 248, 228-230, 246-250, Butler, *Women in the Church of God in Christ*, 12.

⁶⁵³ Gilkes, "If It Wasn't For the Women," 61-75.

⁶⁵⁴ Phillips, *The Womanist Reader*, xxix.

⁶⁵⁵ Interview, Mrs Titilayo Oluwatudimu, February 2019.

how to prepare food so that when they get home they can prepare something for themselves and for the family.’⁶⁵⁶

Like the church mother who watches out for those who are in crisis, Mrs Oluwatudimu is ready and willing to respond to the needs she sees as she is attentive to the socio-economic realities of children in her school and their families. While she has a formal role within the school (and recognises the need to fulfil the targets that all schools must meet) she carries her responsibilities in a relational and prayerful manner always keeping the children, their families and her colleagues at the centre of her concerns. These practical aspects of Mrs Oluwatudimu’s ‘community motherhood’, do not outweigh her concerns for the spiritual needs of the children and their families. She spoke consistently of the need to both pass on and live out what she called ‘biblical principles’: love, justice, compassion, courage, forgiveness and truthfulness.⁶⁵⁷ In a similar way to the church mother who watches over the doctrine and spirituality of church members, so Mrs Oluwatudimu has a spiritual role in this school where she seeks to nurture the children of her community holistically. She offers the children breakfast and seeks to help develop their self-esteem, but she also desires to teach them about God’s love in words and actions. As she explains in her own words: ‘God showed me what it’s like when he looked after me, so why should I do any less for these children that he brings to me, or for the teachers or even the parents.’⁶⁵⁸

If Mrs Oluwatudimu models ‘community motherhood’, then Rachel at Spark2Life is a young woman working in a male-dominated space and embodying a particular approach in contrast with the norm, which we might describe as ‘community sisterhood’. Like the ‘community mother’, we can see the role of ‘community sister’ as a public role with roots in

⁶⁵⁶ Interview, Mrs Titilayo Oluwatudimu, February 2019.

⁶⁵⁷ Interview, Mrs Titilayo Oluwatudimu, February 2019.

⁶⁵⁸ Interview, Mrs Titilayo Oluwatudimu, February 2019.

the classical pentecostal church were women of all ages (who do not have the role of ‘church mother’) are often named sister.⁶⁵⁹ For the ‘community sister’, the fatherhood of God does not simply mean that ‘all *saints* must be siblings’ (emphasis mine), but all *people*.⁶⁶⁰ The need for siblings, and the solidarity that comes with sibling relationships, is particularly important for those who are on the margins in the wider socio-economic and political order. It is these people that Rachel seeks to serve through her work with young male offenders which is not without risks as she explains:

‘...as a woman it’s not easy working with this client group so you have to be strong, in terms of not allowing these young people to get into your head because they’re very manipulative, they know how to work the system...So there’s a level of wisdom and discernment that you have to follow.’⁶⁶¹

Rachel is very attentive to the gender power dynamics at play for her as a woman working in such a field. However, while recognising her own vulnerability and the need to maintain appropriate boundaries, she is also attentive to the vulnerabilities of the men she works with as young men who have often experienced traumas of various kinds. In her eyes, taking the ‘tough love’ approach is not often effective, though this is often the common approach by male colleagues in other organisations. For Rachel, women have the capacity to bring unique strategies to this work which men may learn from:

‘...it’s important to have strong women working with these guys, because usually the men’s approach is tough love and...because there is such a breakdown in some of their relationships with their fathers, they don’t take that very well...so my thing is, go in with love, but also men need to learn this too in their approach...’⁶⁶²

Rachel’s insights are important because her language and her practice resists the dualisms which paint men and women as opposites, and thus with having distinct needs. While some

⁶⁵⁹ Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 55-56.

⁶⁶⁰ Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 56.

⁶⁶¹ Interview, Rachel, February 2019.

⁶⁶² Interview, Rachel, February 2019.

of her male colleagues operate within a particular framework of how they should engage these young men caught in crime, and also what the young men need (tough love) Rachel discerns the limitations of this. Instead she recognises that men who work in this sector must engage with these young offenders with an understanding of their holistic needs, love and acceptance rather than simply discipline. Lisa P Stephenson's work which focuses on church leadership, argues that 'dismantling the dualisms' of gender, is crucial to allowing women to flourish fully within churches.⁶⁶³ However, it also seems from what Rachel demonstrates, that such dualisms are also deeply harmful to men as well as women. As bell hooks explains:

'When females are in emotional pain, the sexist thinking that says emotions should and can matter to women makes it possible for us to at least voice our heart...Patriarchal mores teach a form of emotional stoicism to men that says they are more manly if they do not feel, but if by chance they should feel and the feeling hurt, the manly response is to stuff them down, to forget about them, to hope they go away.'⁶⁶⁴

Hooks makes it clear that the false claims which define men and women in particular ways and elevate a type of masculinity over other forms of masculinity and whatever is deemed feminine, also undermines the humanity of men. Rachel recognises this and by attending not only to the realities of embodiment (i.e., the power dynamics between men and women) but also to myths about masculinity and femininity, Rachel is equipped to better offer sisterhood to the young men she works with. Her drawing together of strength and love further affirms this blurring of the traditional lines between what it is to be a man or woman, and what each actually needs to flourish.

Both Mrs Oluwatudimu and Rachel experience great respect and honour in their

⁶⁶³ Stephenson, *Dismantling the Dualisms*, 115.

⁶⁶⁴ Bell hooks, *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity and Love* (New York: Washington Square Press, 2004) 6-7.

communities, as they lead and serve in ways which would not happen within the church walls. As a young woman Rachel would most likely be confined to working only with other young women or groups of young people of any gender, as even progressive classical pentecostal churches would be reluctant to allow a young woman to work pastorally with young men.⁶⁶⁵ Though able to lead children's ministry in the church, Mrs Oluwatudimu's senior leadership position would not be consistent with the norms in pentecostal churches, particularly as her husband is not a senior leader in the church. The fact that women (apart from the wives of senior leaders) must function outside of the church structure in order to fulfil the extent of their calling, is a travesty for the many women who do feel called to church ministry and leadership and also for the church which misses out on these gifts. Yet if we hold women's leadership outside of the church within the wider progressive perspective in which the Spirit is understood to be transcending sacred-secular dualisms, then we might consider this reality to be a work of the Spirit despite the church's upholding of patriarchy. The Holy Spirit may be perceived as one who is 'making a way out of no way'⁶⁶⁶ for women to fulfil their vocations in unexpected places, without the church's restrictions.

6.3.3 Trickle-Down Justice?

In analysing the dynamics of power and gender in progressive pentecostal organisations, we have seen that overall, the very specific perspectives and interests of women can often be forgotten in the light of general concerns. Despite the realities of socio-economic inequality for women, gender inequality is not named whether by men or women. We have seen that Mrs Oluwatudimu as 'community mother' and Rachel as 'community sister' both work in

⁶⁶⁵ Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 242-257.

⁶⁶⁶ "Making a way out of no way" is a central theme in black women's struggles and God's assistance in helping them to overcome oppression. "Making a way out of no way" can serve as a summarizing concept for the ways that various womanist theologians describe God's liberation of black women.' Monica A. Coleman, *Making a Way Out of No Way: A Womanist Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008) 9.

organisations which are innovative, grassroots-led and responsive to the complex needs of vulnerable people. They like many of their colleagues have lived experience of the issues they seek to resolve, as well as the skills required for political analysis and strategic planning. We have seen that progressive leaders model the holistic discipleship in their willingness to attend to poverty and the realities of inhabiting the world in body that is classed as 'poor' in contexts often labelled 'deprived.' However, the particularities of inhabiting the world as a woman are often absent, even within organisations which are good examples of grassroots work, agency and self-determination. While the concern for community empowerment or liberation might be the driving narrative of these progressive pentecostal leaders, they are not beyond the temptations of certain distortions of power, primarily in relation to women. While the intersection of poverty and race may be taken seriously, the dynamic of gender is almost always missed out of justice discussions and justice work, limiting the extent of the 'progressivism' of pentecostal organisations. It is this matter of gender and intersectionality that I will turn to in this section by focussing especially on *Bringing Hope* and *Spark2Life*.

The founders of both organisations - Dez Brown at *Spark2Life* and Rev Dr Carver Anderson and Rev Robin Thompson at *Bringing Hope* - are African Caribbean men who continue to lead each organisation as CEOs. By extension, women are absent from senior leadership, but are involved as Trustees in both cases.⁶⁶⁷ In the case of *Spark2Life* which has a sizeable staff team, it is overwhelmingly male with 3 women and 16 men.⁶⁶⁸ On the one hand, this might be considered understandable and strategic as the organisation is primarily concerned with perpetrators of violent crime and those most at risk of involvement in

⁶⁶⁷ "Trustees," *Bringing Hope*, Accessed 29th September 2020, <https://www.bringinghope.co.uk/trustees.html> and "Our Board," *Spark2Life*, Accessed 29th September 2020, <https://spark2life.co.uk/our-board/>

⁶⁶⁸ "Our Team." *Spark2Life*, Accessed 29th September 2020, <https://spark2life.co.uk/our-team/>

violent crime who have for decades, have more often been male.⁶⁶⁹ Employing a team who is culturally competent and also attuned to the particularities of black male experiences might well be considered an asset. The matter of cultural competence was raised in the staff meeting I observed during which staff lamented what they recognised as a common trend in which larger, white-led organisations win bids for government funding though they lack vital cultural and relational skills with the client base.⁶⁷⁰ Smaller organisations like *Spark2Life* have the skillset and experience to relate well to those they are seeking to serve because of their ethnic diversity but they expressed often being overlooked for funding, and being hindered by lacking access to resources such as bid writers. The existence of these organisations is crucial for the community some might argue, regardless of who is leading them. However, as we have seen in the case of Rachel, women even at the client-facing level offer particular critical perspectives which differ from those of men and have the potential to improve the experience of those they serve. *Bringing Hope* does offer some volunteer support to the female relatives of the men they work with, and at the time of the interviews *Spark2Life* had sought funding to work with young women.⁶⁷¹ However, work with men (and overwhelmingly work *by* men) is prioritised by both organisations and raises the question of the extent to which organisations which prioritise men and their needs can truly be said to be working towards black liberation for all black people or whole community development in practice even this may be their underlying ambition or part of it.⁶⁷²

As opposed to working towards whole community development or ‘liberation’, it

⁶⁶⁹ John F. MacLeod, Peter G. Grove and David P. Farrington, *Explaining Criminal Careers: Implications for Justice Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 40-43.

⁶⁷⁰ Observation, *Spark2Life*, February 2019.

⁶⁷¹ Interview, Rachel, February 2019; See: “Sisters of Hope,” *Bringing Hope*, accessed September 29, 2020, <https://www.bringinghope.co.uk/sisters-of-hope.html>.

⁶⁷² Interview, Rev Dr Carver Anderson, July 2019; Interview, Dez Brown, February 2019.

would seem that both organisations are focussed on mainly on improving the lives of men, and particularly men from UK minority ethnic backgrounds. This is commendable and necessary work on all accounts - as we saw in section 4.4.2 - and will undoubtedly serve the community at large. However, conflating the needs and interests of men with those of the whole community results in the erasure of the specific needs of women and children, and specifically the ways in which men might be both 'oppressed' in terms of the classing and racializing of their bodies, and also 'oppressor' in their gendering. As Crenshaw clarifies in the case of violence against women of colour:

'many of the experiences Black women face are not subsumed within the traditional boundaries of race or gender discrimination as these boundaries are currently understood...the intersection of racism and sexism factors into Black women's lives in ways that cannot be captured wholly by looking at the race or gender dimensions of those experiences separately...race and gender intersect in shaping structural, political, and representational aspects of violence against women of color.'⁶⁷³

Instead of taking this intersectional approach, through which socio-economic inequality, racism and sexism as viewed as interweaving issues to be addressed simultaneously, progressives tend to take what we might considered 'trickle-down justice' approach.

'Trickle-down' theory has made its way into political parlance with some suggesting that that supporting tax cuts for the wealthy will allow more wealth to 'trickle-down' to lower classes, while others have lambasted this idea.⁶⁷⁴ In speaking of 'trickle-down' *justice* I mean to propose that these progressive pentecostal organisations function on the premise that serving men of colour – who are among the socio-economically and racially disadvantaged but still benefit from gender-based privilege – will lead to the liberation of the whole

⁶⁷³ Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins," 1244.

⁶⁷⁴ Thomas Sowell, "*Trickle Down Theory*" and "*Tax Cuts for the Rich*." (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2012) 1-3.

community, including women and children. Focussing on men as a priority of social justice work without taking seriously the socio-economic problems created and sustained by patriarchy, does not in fact serve the entire community whether men or women.⁶⁷⁵ On the contrary, this approach threatens to leave black women and their children underserved and victimised, even by those with ambitions to be work towards whole community liberation. Community development which does not hold women's perspectives, interests and needs alongside men's will inevitably reinforce the patriarchal norms which undermine the flourishing of all people.

The opposite to 'trickle down justice' is the intentional development of women and especially women of colour as leaders within progressive pentecostal community organisations. It is these women who know within their own bodies, the problems of a social and political world dominated by white patriarchy. Attentiveness to their lives and voices will undoubtedly equip progressive pentecostals with the insight which (along with the Spirit) will guide pentecostals on the path to the liberated future which the Spirit who anointed Christ seeks to bring about.

6.4 Conclusion

We have focussed in this chapter on progressive pentecostalism as a complex picture of tensions and variations in terms of their willingness and capacity to integrate the politics of embodiment, with spirituality and theology. We saw that some continue to struggle to

⁶⁷⁵ Research in International Development has demonstrated consistently that communities are enhanced as a whole when interventions target women instead of men. See Laurie C. Miller, Neena Joshi, Mahendra Lohani, Beatrice Rogers, Shubh Mahato, Shibani Ghosh and Patrick Webb, "Women's education level amplifies the effects of a livelihoods-based intervention on household wealth, child diet, and child growth in rural Nepal," *International Journal for Equity in Health* 16, no. 183 (2017): 1-17; SM Mogotlane and L Uys. "The function and impact of women's organizations on community development and rural primary health care." *Curationis* 23, no. 1 (2000): 19-24; Evonne Lack and Dorothy N. Gamble, "Southeastern Women's Involvement in Sustainable Development Efforts: Their Roles and Concerns," *Journal of Community Practice* 5 no. 1-2, (1998): 85-101.

attend to the diversity of human experience in their theological formation and remain unable to conceive of a holistic discipleship which includes social and political life. On the other hand, we saw that where diverse leadership and voices are embraced, there is a deepening of discipleship which inevitably gives rise to more relevant public theological formation and action. We saw that these progressive pentecostal leaders succeed at blurring the dualisms which hampered some of their early spiritual foremother and forefathers and continue to undermine the relevance of some of their contemporary counterparts. They are able to recognise their human experience is core to their vocation under God, they embrace the intermingling of divine-human action, they see the spirit of truth as revealing wisdom and knowledge through 'secular' sources and are even able to draw connections with other faiths. In the midst of this progress, we also critically reflected on the place of women in both the churches and these innovative organisations, noticing that even progressive spaces are not immune from the patriarchal norms which undermine the flourishing of women and the community more broadly.

7 THE SPIRIT AND SCARS: DISCIPLESHIP IN THE MIDST OF OPPRESSION AND TRAUMA

We have analysed up to this point the past and present trajectories of pentecostal spirituality as it relates to the body. We have seen that while the Spirit may be recognised as present within and felt through the body, the Spirit is not understood to attend to the politics of embodiment in all aspects. I have argued that the failure to recognise and welcome the holistic work of the Spirit - particularly in regard to those who inhabit the world in bodies which are restricted and oppressed on the basis of class, gender and race - represents an anti-pneumatic posture. By this, I mean that the Spirit who seeks to restore fullness of life to all people in all aspects is stifled because of a dualistic pneumatology and a prevention or limitation of the truth-telling of those filled by the Spirit regarding their social and political experience.

We have seen in the previous chapter that among progressive pentecostals today – those who hold an integral understanding of the Spirit’s work which transcends sacred-secular divides – disintegration marks anthropology, public theology and action. Overall, the impact of poverty on the human person is clearly identifiable for progressives and is addressed through their ministries at the interpersonal and systemic levels. However, progressive pentecostals are inconsistent in their willingness to engage in critical reflections and action on the matters of race, sex and power. The determination to deal with social inequalities without considering the intersectionality of class inequality, racism and sexism results in often piecemeal approaches in which churches may address poverty but ignore racism or sexism in the church and wider world or focus on poverty and racism while being complicit in patriarchy. In this final chapter, I seek to outline a pentecostal anthropology in which the presence and work of the Holy Spirit is integrated with the fullness of human experience, particularly oppression and trauma.

Pentecostal theology involves a combination of christocentrism and pneumocentrism, both of which are central in the bringing forth of an integrated pneumatic anthropology. In order to consider the holistic work of the Spirit as it relates to the human person, we must look to Christ who is not only the Spirit-baptiser, but also the one on whom the Spirit descends.⁶⁷⁶ Most importantly, we must see what the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit meant in the life of Jesus who himself, in his own time, lived within and died at the hands of a politics of death. In order to explore Jesus' incarnation, death and resurrection as they relate to anthropology, we will take a womanist approach, while drawing also on biblical studies and trauma studies to inform this perspective.

Womanist theologians seek to take an intersectional approach to theology, which is rooted in the experiences of those racialised as black and gendered as female, and often also living in the reality of socio-economic deprivation. Womanist theology involves the pursuit of the immanent God who is with black women in their racial and sexual oppression ('black women's Jesus') rather than the transcendent and distant deity who is complicit in their suffering ('white women's Christ').⁶⁷⁷ The incarnation has, for womanists, been the site at which black women meet a God who is allied with those 'on the underside of humanity.'⁶⁷⁸ Womanists do not simply serve poor black women and those concerned for their lives; womanists speak to all those who are motivated to critique and undermine a politics of death in which whiteness, wealth and masculinity are idolised to the dehumanisation of all people. The common understanding among womanists is that socio-economic inequality, racism or sexism (and some would include imperialism and

⁶⁷⁶ Luke 3:16, 22.

⁶⁷⁷ Grant, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus*, 1-3.

⁶⁷⁸ Grant, *White women's Christ and Black women's Jesus*, 209.

heterosexism) can be recognised as distinct problems but cannot be defeated as lone issues; an intersectional approach must be taken in order to confront them.⁶⁷⁹ This makes womanist theology crucial for reflections on life in Britain which as we have seen in chapter 4, is indelibly shaped by these same forces both historically and in the present. Womanist theology then, offers tools for dismantling what Audre Lourde calls ‘the master’s house’, which is created by and for white patriarchy, and therefore is sustained rather than challenged by white masculinist elitist scholarship.⁶⁸⁰ The tools for dismantling this ‘master’s house’ are not only held in the hands of womanists, but also in the hands of mujerista theologians, Asian feminist theologians, queer theologians and all who take seriously the need to recognise and interrogate the intersectional realities of elitism, whiteness and patriarchy (as well as heterosexism, ableism and imperialism) on human experience. It is this prophetic utterance, in dialogue with pentecostalism where we will locate the resources for a pneumatic anthropology that is integrated and true to the realities of holistic human experience.

This chapter will begin with a discussion of the incarnation as a foundation for theological anthropology from a womanist and feminist perspective. I will argue, with the help of Eboni Marshall Turman and Lisa Stephenson, that Jesus’ embodiment and filling with the Spirit opens up the possibilities for an integrated pneumatic anthropology. Secondly, I argue in dialogue with Candida Moss and Shelley Rambo that an integrated pneumatic anthropology is seen directly in the Spirit’s retention of the scars of Jesus after the resurrection. Finally, I argue on the basis of both of these sections, that an integrated

⁶⁷⁹ Grant, *White women’s Christ and Black women’s Jesus*, 67-68, 206.

⁶⁸⁰ Audre Lourde, *“The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House,”* 1983 (London: Penguin, 2018).

pneumatic anthropology acts as a theological framework for public theology geared towards justice and actions of solidarity between and with those who experience poverty and/or are victimised by racism and sexism.

7.1 The Incarnation: A Foundation for Pentecostal Anthropology

In *Toward a Womanist Ethic of the Incarnation*, Eboni Marshall Turman argues that the struggle of the contemporary church to accept bodies (and especially bodies problematised by gender and race) is rooted in the problematising of the body of Jesus.⁶⁸¹ Turman is concerned by the theological emphasis in which the body of Jesus matters because of how it is acted *upon*. Taking the oppression of black women in the black church as an example, she argues that identifying only with what happens *to* the body of Jesus enables oppressed people (in her case black men) to tackle their own oppression, while continuing to ‘reinscribe injustice in the lives of others’ (in this case black women).⁶⁸² Instead, she suggests that a focus on incarnation as a resistance to the opposing of binary and hierarchical identities (divinity and humanity in the case of Chalcedon) opens up the possibility of the deeper work of inclusion for all people. As Turman explains:

‘In the face of a multiplicity of fragmenting injustices like racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism, those “-isms” that complicate the identity of Christian churches [I would add, the world] Chalcedon responsibly leaves room for interpreting communities to “change the choreography for themselves” and to conceive of and employ Jesus in ways that are life affirming. Although this is the guiding premise upon which Christian faith has largely constructed its identity, the church’s lived identity— its ethics— have too often disrupted the logic of incarnation as it manifests itself in the Chalcedonian creed, and have disregarded the significance of its subsequent assertion of Jesus as both/and when confronted with the problem of embodied difference.’⁶⁸³

⁶⁸¹ Eboni Marshall Turman, *Toward a Womanist Ethic: Black bodies, the Black church, and the Council of Chalcedon* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

⁶⁸² Turman, *Toward a Womanist Ethic*, 161.

⁶⁸³ Turman, *Towards a Womanist Ethic*, 56.

We have seen that for pentecostals historically and in the present, there has been a propensity to 'reinscribe injustice in the lives of others' within churches. Women both in the past and in the present have been and are frequently excluded from some levels of leadership, even though some men do lead alongside their wives as we have seen [4.2.3.3; 6.3.1]. White power has undermined multicultural congregations in the past and the evidence suggests whiteness continues to dominate some multiracial congregations and denominations in the present although there are also signs of better integration and understanding across racial lines [3.1.4; 4.2.2.3; 6.1]. The increasingly middle-class nature of pentecostals in Britain may be considered progress, but consequentially causes some within the movement to lose proximity with the poor and they conform to middle class values and cultures. Turman mentions 'heterosexism' which is the norm across the overwhelming majority of pentecostal churches in Britain as well as in the world, where the movement's conservative social and sexual ethics mean heterosexuality is considered normative and the benchmark of holiness. There is then, a clear need to consider what pentecostals (including those deemed progressive) may draw from Turman's analysis of the incarnation for the sake of pentecostal ethics.

Turman's work moves us further along from where we have previously been with our analysis of pentecostalism. I have argued that pentecostals struggle with a pneumatic dualism in which the Spirit is understood to engage the body in a physiological and religious sense, but not in a political sense. Turman pushes this observation further by asserting that the incarnation demands that we question the very political categorisations that we have chosen. In pneumatological terms, this means asking not only where the Spirit is engaged in redressing power inequalities between those embodied differently, but how the Spirit might indeed challenge the very categories we use to describe different kinds of human beings. If

Jesus' incarnation is seen as undermining the divine-human binary, by him being truly both God and man, then what implications might this insight have for pentecostals who recognise this Jesus as saviour and yet cling to their own binaries? In *Dismantling the Dualisms*, Lisa Stephenson has addressed the problem of power inequality between men and women within pentecostalism, by arguing that in addition to *Imago Dei* and *Imago Christus*, pentecostal anthropology must be shaped by *Imago Spiritus*. As Stephenson explains:

'...with an *imago Spiritus* approach a person's particular embodiment is preserved as the Spirit works in and through those distinctives. An *imago Spiritus* approach to theological anthropology suggests a common anthropology in that both male and female are affirmed in their full and equal humanity, but it also suggests a distinctive anthropology in that the biological differences among persons are not obliterated. The effect of Spirit baptism is not that persons are transformed into androgynous beings, of course, but that who they are is preserved and taken up into the life-giving and life-affirming presence and power of the Spirit. In this way, the Spirit enlivens and accentuates one's humanity.'⁶⁸⁴

Stephenson raises a crucial point here; that Spirit-baptism does not equate to erasure of differences within human embodiment but to enhancement of full humanity for each person regardless of their sex. When drawn together with Turman's observations regarding the non-binary nature of the incarnation, Spirit-baptism can be understood as an undermining of the structures of power and privilege associated with gender. Stephenson does not deal with the matter of race inequality in her work, but the connections are clear. The *imago spiritus* she describes, offers resources to consider the holistic nature of the Spirit's work in baptism in relation to the politics of embodiment in terms of race and other elements.

The politics of embodiment are dealt with by Turman and Stephenson, in relation to church life. However, Turman's ideas particularly equip us to move beyond church

⁶⁸⁴ Stephenson, *Dismantling the Dualisms*, 134-5.

discussions, to consider wider social and political matters. In focussing on Jesus' incarnation, Thurman invites us to consider the social and political context of Jesus' embodiment which we will turn to now. While Jesus's masculinity affords him certain privileges as feminists and womanists have noted, his embodiment as a poor Jewish man living under Roman occupation allows him, as Howard Thurman describes, to identify with the global poor, thus making him 'more truly a son of men' than he would have been had he been born 'a rich son of Israel.'⁶⁸⁵ We have already seen how Jesus' life among the outcasts and socially isolated inspires progressive pentecostals who recognise him as a teacher, showing them how to be in the world. Yet, though we are at risk of ignoring Thurman's advice by returning to focus on what happens *to* Jesus' body, our interest in pentecostal resistance to inequalities and injustice in British life (including church life), means that we must think concretely about the death of Jesus at the hands of political (including religious) powers. In particular, we will locate the significance of Jesus' death for pentecostals, as positioning him in solidarity with those who suffer at the hands of unjust systems whether ecclesial, socio-economic or political.

As scholars have argued, Jesus's death could well be considered inevitable in a world in which imperialism and violence were normative.⁶⁸⁶ However, inevitability of systemic violence might well be used in reference to Britain today, when we consider the historic and ongoing entrenchment of socio-economic inequality due to the negative forces of capitalism, as well as the ongoing impact of imperialism, colonialism and patriarchy. These forms of systemic violence have impacted pentecostals historically and in the present as we

⁶⁸⁵ Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited*, 7.

⁶⁸⁶ Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1992) 117-118; James Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (New York: Orbis Books, 2011) 1-2; Douglas, *Stand Your Ground*, 174.

have seen throughout this thesis. The importance of Jesus' death for those pentecostals who live in the midst of suffering and experience it themselves, is drawn out by Marcia Clarke's study of the spirituality of black British pentecostal women (BBPW), as she explains:

'Despite the atrocities of slavery, prejudice and discrimination the BBPW [Black British Pentecostal Woman] has still managed to encounter Jesus, the one who gives divine power to the believer and who enables her to survive traumas in her life. The Black British Pentecostal woman knows that Jesus understands and knows what it is to be human, but further, he also endured oppression and discrimination...⁶⁸⁷

Scholars have highlighted the dangers of redemptive suffering narratives (in which suffering is viewed as a good in itself) for oppressed peoples,⁶⁸⁸ and so we will be careful not to take Clarke's words to be a legitimisation of trauma as a positive aspect of life which must be accepted. However, Clarke highlights for us the ways in which the cause of the black woman despised by British society is united with the cause of Christ, despised by his own social and political context, and by the world continually. The Spirit which rested upon Christ is understood to be the same Spirit who empowers the BBPW in the midst of her oppressions, through her encounter with the Jesus who knows what it is to be oppressed. While oppressions may differ, Jesus' death at the hands of the religious and political powers of his day gives him special significance for the BBPW who suffers at the hand of contemporary religious and political powers. For those who suffer in this world, in which inequalities are rife and violence seems inevitable, Jesus is not simply king, but co-sufferer. Their hope of course is in the resurrection through which sin and the death meted out by the world is overcome, as we will now see.

⁶⁸⁷ Clarke, "Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience," 116.

⁶⁸⁸ Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*, 86-89, 91-92, 230.

7.2 Scars in Resurrection: The Spirit, Bodies and Life

If we focus on Luke's Gospel, a common focal point for pentecostal scholarship not least because of its connection with the story of the early church as described in Acts, we find numerous points of convergence between pneumatology and the matters of embodiment, oppression and justice in Jesus' life. Jesus uses the words of the prophet Isaiah to define his mission in Luke 4, when he reads from the scroll: 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free.'⁶⁸⁹ This passage in Luke has formed the basis for emphasising the liberating work of the Spirit who anoints Jesus Christ to drive out evil forces which oppress individual people and communities, to cure sickness and diseases and to embody the reign of God on earth.⁶⁹⁰ However, it is in the resurrection of Jesus, and in particular the resurrected body of Jesus, that we might locate an integrated pneumatology in which the Holy Spirit attends to the oppression and suffering which comes with inhabiting the world in particular bodies. While Luke makes no reference to the Spirit in relation to the resurrection, it is Paul's pneumatological reading of the resurrection which offers an important thread for pentecostal thought. Paul, in reflecting on the matter of the resurrection speaks of 'the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead',⁶⁹¹ making a direct connection between the Holy Spirit and the resurrection. This recognition by Paul, that God's Spirit is present and active in the resurrection, means reflection on what happens and importantly for us, what does *not* happen in the raising of Jesus from the dead, is essential for pentecostals. In

⁶⁸⁹ Luke 4:18.

⁶⁹⁰ Wenk, *Community Forming Power*, 210-218.

⁶⁹¹ Romans 8:11.

particular I want to ask in this section why, in the giving of life to Jesus' body, does the Spirit leave the scars? And what might this offer to a pneumatic anthropology?

If Jesus' embodiment and death place him among those oppressed in the world, then the resurrection can be discussed as the sign of hope for those victimised by the politics of death. The resurrection of Jesus effectively exposes the futility of these powers which seek to dominate and oppress, before God's ultimate power.⁶⁹² Moreover, the resurrection is world-changing because God's defeat of the powers does not depend on the weapons of the world (namely violence and hate) but by holy resistance as Brown Douglas explains:

'The resurrection is God's definitive victory over crucifying powers of evil. Ironically, the power that attempts to destroy Jesus on the cross is actually itself destroyed on the cross. The cross represents the power that denigrates human bodies, destroys life and preys on the most vulnerable in society. As the cross is defeated, so too is that power. The impressive factor is how it is defeated. It is defeated by a life-giving rather than a life-negating force.'⁶⁹³

However, theologians overall do not tend to deal precisely with the matter of Jesus post-resurrection body. While Turman warns us of the limitations of reflecting only on what happens *to* Jesus body, I would suggest that theological reflection has not engaged sufficiently with what happens to the actual body of Jesus. The scars which remain in/on Jesus' body post-resurrection are not often discussed. Where reflection on Jesus' post-resurrection scars does take place is in the biblical scholarship of Candida Moss and in the theology of Shelly Rambo in the field of trauma studies. As such we will engage both in a discussion of the scars of Jesus, left by the Spirit who raised Christ from the dead. We will integrate these perspectives within the overall focus on pentecostalism and the wider

⁶⁹² James Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (New York: Orbis Books, 1997) 46, 65; Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom*, 5-6; Bretherton, *Christ and the Common Life*, 19-20.

⁶⁹³ Douglas, *Stand Your Ground*, 182.

womanist concern to address the intersectionality of class, race and gender politics which oppose the work of the Spirit of God in the world.

7.2.1 Jesus' Scars: Redeeming Oppressed Bodies

If Jesus is one who identifies with those victimised by structural violence, then the scars of Jesus post-resurrection ensure that he continues to be positioned alongside those who suffer not only physical violence, but dehumanisation at the hands of systems and structures of power. In addition to this, the scars of Jesus offer redemption to all of those who are scarred or wounded as a result of them being acted upon by unjust powers.

Candida Moss explains that biblical scholars have, like theologians, tended to focus on exploring what the resurrection might mean, without paying attention to the resurrected body of Jesus itself. However, in her work *Divine Bodies*, Moss argues that marks or scars ('*tupoi*' in the Greek) held significance in ancient cultures:

'Scars can be either marks of shame and degradation— the stigmata of a servile or criminal body— or markers of virtue... “honorable scars, all received on the front” [and] the “foul scars of slavery” that were received on the back.’⁶⁹⁴

In the Gospel of John she argues, the piercing of Jesus' side equates to an 'honourable wound', with John keen to paint Jesus' death as a 'moment of exaltation'.⁶⁹⁵ However, when we look to the Gospel of Luke there is no mention of this 'honourable' piercing in the side.⁶⁹⁶ Luke states only that Pilate suggested flogging Jesus but that in the end, Jesus is crucified at the demand of the crowd (Luke 23:16, 22, 33), equating to 'narrative silence'⁶⁹⁷ in regard to scars or wounds. From Moss' analysis, we might conclude that Luke's refusal to give Jesus an honourable status - instead presenting him as one who experiences degradation - reaffirms

⁶⁹⁴ Candida R. Moss, *Divine Bodies: Resurrecting Perfection in the New Testament and Early Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019) 32.

⁶⁹⁵ Moss, *Divine Bodies*, 33.

⁶⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 26.

⁶⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 26.

Jesus's position among the degraded. It is from this position of degradation, that Jesus might remain in solidarity (in his death as well as his life) with those who suffer without honour at the hands of dominating systems of unjust power.⁶⁹⁸ The Gospels taken together then, give us a picture of Jesus' wounds as exhibiting both honour and dishonour. Jesus is dishonoured by the world, hung on a cross between two thieves, as Luke describes, and flogged, gaining what Moss refers to as the 'stigmata of a servile or criminal body.'⁶⁹⁹ But at the same time, Jesus has wilfully given up his life for the sake of others in a stand against the powers of sin and death, thus making his wounds consistent with those of an honourable sacrifice.

The 'tupoi' which speak to the violence Jesus has suffered and his ultimate death are not erased in the resurrection.⁷⁰⁰ The Spirit which healed and restored so many other bodies, does not do what might be considered a complete work with Jesus' body. Moss explains that New Testament scholars have interpreted the retention of the *tupoi* to be important for the purpose of identifying Jesus, and addressing the metaphysical question by proving he was a real human being not a ghost.⁷⁰¹ However, she also argues that we must also recognise the implications for us as embodied beings asking 'if Jesus is recognized by his wounds, then should we not imagine that the resurrection of everyone else will similarly preserve premortem marks, and by extension, all kinds of infirmities?'⁷⁰² While her attention here is primarily on the ways in which our obsession with aesthetics has impacted on our expectations regarding the resurrection, she raises a crucial theological question for us. For if, as Paul suggests, believers may experience the life of the Spirit who raised Christ from the

⁶⁹⁸ The solidarity of Jesus with those killed at the hands of unjust systems and structures, is the entire point of Cone's *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* and is also seen very clearly in Douglas' analysis of anti-black violence and the case of Trayvon Martin's murder in *Stand Your Ground*, 171-203.

⁶⁹⁹ Moss, *Divine Bodies*, 32.

⁷⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 28-29.

⁷⁰¹ *Ibid*, 26.

⁷⁰² *Ibid*, 25.

death and 'now gives life to [their] mortal bodies' (Romans 8:11), then we should consider the implications for life in the here and now, not only after death. If the Spirit raised Christ from the dead, then it is the Spirit who retained Jesus's wounds. So then we may ask: if the Spirit maintains Jesus' wounds in the resurrection, then should we not imagine that life in the Spirit might also involve the preservation of the marks of believers' suffering and a call to observe the *tupoi* of their neighbours? This pneumatological framing of attentiveness to suffering helps to underpin a pentecostal anthropology into which trauma and suffering may be integrated rather than excluded.

7.2.2 Discerning Scars: A Ministry of the Spirit

Shelley Rambo takes on this question of the significance of Jesus' scars in her work *Resurrecting Wounds: Living in the Aftermath of Trauma*.⁷⁰³ Rambo argues that Christianity has had an ongoing discomfort with Jesus' wounds seeking to erase them historically, despite their retention in the text.⁷⁰⁴ Through her own work in trauma studies and theology she comes to assert that:

'The return of Jesus reveals something about *life in the midst of death*. If we take the line between life and death to porous, as the context of trauma suggests, then resurrecting is not so much about life overcoming death as it is about *life resurrecting mind the ongoingness of death*. The return of Jesus marks a distinct territory for thinking about life as marked by wounds and yet recreated through them.'⁷⁰⁵

We have noted already that both the incarnation and the presence of the Holy Spirit can be understood as God bringing life in the midst of death historically and in the present. Moss begins to blur the opposition between life and suffering, by suggesting that aspects of

⁷⁰³ Shelly Rambo, *Resurrecting Wounds: Living in the Aftermath of Trauma* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2017).

⁷⁰⁴ Rambo, *Resurrecting Wounds*, 17-42.

⁷⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 7.

embodiment which are deemed flawed or 'broken' may be preserved after death. Here, Rambo sets this blurring of the opposition between life and death in the very body of Jesus who embodies life but carries the marks of death upon him, even after the resurrection. Life for Jesus after the resurrection, involves living with the memories of trauma, etched into his very body. Drawn together with the Pauline pneumatological reading of the resurrection then, we might state that the Spirit can be seen to sustain the memory of trauma, by retaining the marks of Christ's crucifixion.⁷⁰⁶ The memory is retained for Jesus but also for his disciples whose comfort does not come from the suppression of memory, but in the remembrance of trauma held in the ultimate overwhelming life of God's Spirit.

We have already noted the complexity of the pentecostal relationship to the body but considering the body as a bearer of trauma in the way Rambo describes, highlights why shifts in pentecostal perspectives are critical for the movement and humanity overall. Recognising the Spirit as one who retains scars and calls attention to trauma, can change the ways pentecostals respond to their own pain, that of their neighbours and of the world at large. By considering Moss and Rambo's scholarship on the body of Jesus from a pneumatological perspective, we find the Spirit very deeply engaged with the fullness of Jesus' bodily experiences including the impact of political violence. The violence meted out against the body of Jesus and thus the wounds and the scars he receives, speak to us of the kinds of violence (not always physical but often systemic and structural) experienced by all kinds of people. Rambo names 'the wounds of racism' which live under the 'collective skin' of America,⁷⁰⁷ which we have seen are also the reality for life in Britain. We might consider

⁷⁰⁶ 'The wounds bring back memories. They reminded them of what they wanted to forget.' Rambo, *Resurrecting Wounds*, 71

⁷⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 71

colonialism to have left many wounds under the skins of many nations, as well as the wounds caused by the negative impact of capitalism, and patriarchy. These wounds are both collective but also graver for those who are burdened under the weight of these realities.

The nuance that Moss highlights for us between honourable and dishonourable scars is similar to the tension Rambo expounds upon between good and necessary struggle and the trauma of systemic violence. In the context of contemporary Britain, some progressive pentecostal leaders could be considered to carry 'honourable scars' through their willingness to follow the example of Jesus who is willing to be wounded for the sake of others. Those leaders who struggle to transform the unjust realities of their social and political life, may indeed be marked by 'honourable wounds' gained in struggle and resistance against political evils and systemic violence.⁷⁰⁸ This is not a call to adopt a theology of redemptive suffering, which has been used to maintain abuse and mistreatment of those who are already trodden down in various times and contexts.⁷⁰⁹ On the contrary, what makes Jesus' woundedness honourable, is the matter of agency for the person who receives the wounds. It is Jesus' choice to enter into this moment as opposed to it being inflicted upon him, as well as what his actions accomplish, that makes his wounds a testament of honour even when 'shame and degradation' were intended by the powers which nailed him to the cross. Yet, for those trapped in poverty, and facing the additional burdens of racism and sexism, their dehumanisation is imposed upon them and herein lies the depth of their trauma. Those wounds which Moss labels as being relating to 'shame and servitude'⁷¹⁰ are carried by the

⁷⁰⁸ Moss, *Divine Bodies*, 32.

⁷⁰⁹ Diana Hayes, "Standing in the Shoes My Mother Made: The Making of a Catholic Womanist Theologian," in *Deeper Shades of Purple: Womanism In Religion and Society*, ed. Stacey M. Floyd-Thomas (New York: New York University Press, 2006) 61-62.

⁷¹⁰ Moss, *Divine Bodies*, 32.

downtrodden: those living in poverty and those whose struggle is exacerbated by the racialising and gendering of the bodies they inhabit.

In refusing to erase the scars of the resurrected Jesus, the Spirit allows the scars of Jesus to speak of the violence Jesus suffered, even while his living body testifies of the ultimate power of God over death and violence itself. In the case of the body of Jesus, the Spirit does not choose erasure but recognition and redemption. This indicates then, that this same Spirit may also seek to recognise and redeem all the sufferings of our embodied selves, and those of our neighbours. It is not only by 'seeing through the eyes of the crucified Christ' that we attend to 'the immediate instant physicality of the suffering other', but through seeing through the power of the Spirit.⁷¹¹ Where poverty, racism or sexism have caused wounds, the Spirit calls us to see, and even to touch the scars, both our own and those of our neighbours. The redemption of scars depends upon an attentiveness to suffering, both in the personal impact and the wider structural contexts. It is to this matter of attentiveness to trauma that we will turn next.

7.3 Being Human and Being Disciples 'in the Spirit'

We have seen in this chapter so far that the Spirit's retention of Christ's scars on his post-resurrection body indicates the importance of attending to the matters of embodied suffering for pentecostals, people 'of the Spirit'. Understanding the Spirit in this way, means that encounter with the Spirit must involve a willingness to *see* and *touch* the traumas of human experience which are associated with the body, in the way that Jesus' own scars were seen and touched by the disciples.⁷¹² So what will it take for pentecostals to practically

⁷¹¹ Augustine, *The Spirit and the Common Good*, 21.

⁷¹² John 20:27.

embrace the pneumatic integralism which will allow them to attend to the trauma of the body, as seen in the Spirit's resurrecting of Jesus' body?

Valentina Alexander and Robert Beckford have sought to address this problem through a black liberation lens. Both scholars argue that black pentecostals are very attentive to suffering and trauma as people racialised as black in Britain, yet what undermines their action to change their situation, is a lack of political theological education and particularly the development of a liberating theology. Alexander discusses the journey of 'cognitive appropriation of liberation' through which a person is convinced they matter to God, then engages in critical biblical readings, and develops a theological conviction that social and political change is part of the church's mission and the mission of God.⁷¹³ For Beckford, 'freedom begins with the liberation of the mind' and so the solution to black pentecostal disengagement from liberative politics is political theological education.⁷¹⁴ Beckford in particular ends *Dread and Pentecostal* by proposing ways to transform the reading conventions of pentecostals by introducing liberation motifs and dialogue with other black radical traditions beyond the church.⁷¹⁵ As a result, both base their conclusions on one significant assumption: that pentecostal action (or inaction) is influenced fundamentally by rationality, or that *orthopraxy* follows *orthodoxy*. Yet some would suggest that human beings are influenced by pre-rational elements as James Smith explains: 'we are the sorts of animals whose orientation to the world is shaped from the body up more than from the head down.'⁷¹⁶ If this is the case, then Christian formation which engages the whole person (and not just the mind) must incorporate new ways of *thinking* as well as new ways of *being*

⁷¹³ Alexander, "Breaking Every Fetter?" 274.

⁷¹⁴ Beckford, *Dread and Pentecostal*, 188.

⁷¹⁵ *Ibid*, 215.

⁷¹⁶ James K A Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009) 25.

and *acting* without assuming that thinking *precedes* being and acting. This is especially true for any theological project seeking to resist the western epistemological frameworks in which rationalism stifled the epistemic gifts of global cultures.⁷¹⁷ The need to focus on being and doing as well as thinking and believing, is an area of commonality between pentecostal concerns to be ‘doers of the word’ and liberation concerns for *orthopraxy* as well as orthodoxy.⁷¹⁸ For pentecostals, Cheryl Bridges Johns explains that conscientisation (Paulo Freire’s precursor to liberation):

‘involves making known ‘true stories’ which give courage, unveiling the lies of the established order and empowering people to know themselves in a transformative way. The method of conscientisation consequently, includes dialogue and reflection on a cognitive-critical level but goes beyond this to the telling of God’s actions and purposes and the testifying of how humans can join in these actions for the transformation of the world.’⁷¹⁹

Beckford’s challenge to pentecostal ‘reading conventions’ and Alexander’s discussion of ‘cognitive appropriation’ both allude to the need to open up the path to action, by aligning thoughts for liberation. Freire’s ‘conscientisation’, used here by Johns, takes a similar approach, but Johns calls attention to the particular methods which will resonate with pentecostals; that of testifying and listening to the testimonies of others.⁷²⁰ I argue in this final section, that progressive pentecostals might more deeply embrace pneumatic integralism through practicing discernment in relation to bodies as well as spirits. This discernment is contingent upon the capacity to listen as a spiritual practice and by adopting the practice of solidarity as the initial evidence of Spirit-baptism.

7.3.1 Discerning the Voices of Bodies and Spirits

⁷¹⁷ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 2012) 117-144.

⁷¹⁸ Alejandro F. Botta and Pablo R. Andinach, eds. *Bible and the Hermeneutics of Liberation* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009) 2-3, 222.

⁷¹⁹ Johns, *Pentecostal Formation*, 109-10.

⁷²⁰ Cartledge, *Ordinary Theology*, 16-18.

Primarily, pentecostals must recognise discernment as a gift of the Spirit for determining the truth about the embodied experiences of the human family in all of its diversity, not just for the discerning spirits. It is common for ‘political’ or ‘social’ discernment to be used by scholars who are seeking to discuss the public and ethical implications of discernment as a spiritual gift.⁷²¹ Within this imaginary, the Spirit function in the world in a similar way to how she functions within the church; allowing believers to discern the forces of evil, and the work of God, as Eldin Villafañe explains:

‘we are called to discernment - to discern admits a fallen world, the goodness of God's creative act expressed by humanity in and through culture in its history. We are called to discern the Spirit's work not only in the church, but in the world.’⁷²²

However, while the focus of political discernment might be the structures and systems in which spirits or the Holy Spirit may be at work, discerning from the perspective of the body involves attentiveness to the stories people tell about the nature of the world inhabited within particular bodies. Political discernment therefore, depends upon the testimonies of the different kinds of people who inhabit the world and make up the church, the tellers of the ‘true stories’ which Johns highlights for us as crucial for conscientisation.⁷²³

Maxine Howell’s PhD research which focussed on the womanist hermeneutical practices of black women in Britain is one example of such conscientisation. Designating this process ‘womanist pneumatological pedagogy’, Howell explains that the tools include: ‘the centring of black women's experience, historical memory, hermeneutic of suspicion, multi-dimensional analysis and the pursuit of socio-political wholeness (which the British Black

⁷²¹ Steven M. Studebaker, *A Pentecostal Political Theology for American Renewal: Spirit of the Kingdoms, Citizens of the Cities* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) ix, x, 243; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 233.

⁷²² Villafañe, “The Politics of the Spirit,” 167.

⁷²³ Johns, *Pentecostal Formation*, 109-10.

sojourners [her term for Black British women] employ).⁷²⁴ Howells goes on to explain that these tools equip black women to create positive change within the church and beyond as they are empowered to analyse their 'complex existence' in Britain and relate it to the scriptures.⁷²⁵ In this case, black women are able to discern the voice of God through the scriptures but also discern their own voices as they inhabit the world in bodies racialised as black and gendered as female. It is their capacity not only to discern spiritual truths, but embodied ones, which enables them to then act and call for action which might transform the church and the world. This is recognised by Howell and the women she meets with in her research as a *pneumatological* process, not a purely intellectual critical exercise.

It is the varied stories, shared by all those made in the 'Imago Spiritus,'⁷²⁶ which have the power to inspire revelation and action which may drive the church forward in its holistic mission. Recognising all people as made in the Imago *Spiritus* as well as the Imago *Dei*, suggests that the tendencies of hierarchy, unequal power and thus unequal voice might be dismantled not only in relation to gender but in all other forms. Discernment from the perspective of bodies, does not mean that pentecostals reserve the right to decide which stories should be considered true or not, but that they are attentive to how embodiment impacts experience and thus voice, and are then able to see clearly which voices are missing. Humility is the basis for this discernment in which believers, attentive of their own embodiment and power, notice their limitations, and the need to hear the voices of those embodied differently.

⁷²⁴ Maxine Howell, "Towards a Womanist Pneumatological Pedagogy: Reading and Re-Reading the Bible from British Black Women's Perspectives," *Black Theology* 7, no. 1 (April 2009): 92.

⁷²⁵ Howell, "Towards a Womanist Pneumatological Pedagogy," 92.

⁷²⁶ Stephenson, *Dismantling the Dualisms*, 134-5.

A pentecostal church or organisation which is committed to ‘body discernment’ through listening and then action will make room for all kinds of people in its life. I would suggest that for churches this would mean inviting people to preach who have been excluded from pulpits on the basis of their embodiment. It would mean involving those deemed ‘other’ in the process of discerning what the bible is saying and preaching those messages alongside more mainstream (read white, male, middle class) interpretations. This would also mean embracing testimony time in congregational life, in which people of all kinds are able to share their stories of joy and trauma in the context of God’s presence and action in their lives and in the world. This ‘body discernment’ also includes attentiveness to language as Deseta Davis’s research on patriarchal language in the Church of God of Prophecy has shown.⁷²⁷ Davis’ research demonstrates that women tended to be invisible, peripheral or spoken of negatively in sermons, while in contrast were highlighted as being authoritative and respectable.⁷²⁸ In addition, God was spoken of entirely as male with no attempts to use non-sexist or inclusive language.⁷²⁹ The impact for Davis is clear: ‘Women make up the majority of members and visitors within the church, yet they are not being catered for when it comes to preaching.’⁷³⁰ For pentecostals who seek to be attentive to the voice of the Spirit speaking through all people, masculinist hermeneutical norms must be challenged. The voices and perspectives of those on the edges or underneath, must be drawn in and lifted up by the help of the Holy Spirit who speaks through their bodies also.

The discernment of what bodies speak is therefore a prophetic act. It is driven by the question of what a person embodied as they are, having the scars they have, may tell the

⁷²⁷ Deseta Davis, “The Use of Patriarchal Language in the Church of God of Prophecy: A Case Study,” *Black Theology*, 14:3, (2016): 252-276.

⁷²⁸ Davis, “The Use of Patriarchal Language,” 264-7.

⁷²⁹ *Ibid*, 267-8.

⁷³⁰ *Ibid*, 273.

wider church and/or community – somewhat prophetically – about the nature of the world, the evils of the world and the work of God within it. In the context of the church, this willingness to hear the voices of people made in the ‘Imago Spiritus’ and speaking by the power of the Holy Spirit, is a practical recognition of the mystery of the church, in which all of these bodies, with their physical, cultural, gender and sexuality ‘marks’ are all drawn into the one body that is Christ’s.⁷³¹ As womanist ethicist M. Shawn Copeland explains in relation to Christ’s open table:

‘In the very act of nourishing our flesh with his flesh, we women and men are made anew in Christ, emboldened to surrender position and privilege and power and wealth, to abolish all claims to racial and cultural superiority, to contradict repressive codes of gender formation and sexual orientation. In Christ there is neither brown nor black, neither red nor white; in Christ there is neither Creole nor *mestizo*, neither senator nor worker in the *maquiladoro-as*. In Christ, there is neither male nor female, neither gay/lesbian nor straight, neither heterosexual nor homosexual (after Gal 3:28). We are all transformed in Christ: *we are his very own flesh*. If my sister or brother is not at the table, we are not the flesh of Christ.’⁷³²

Though pentecostals will differ from Copeland (a Roman Catholic) in their theology of the Eucharist, her political reading offers resources for reflection in relation to this thesis.

Copeland is not promoting a blindness to human difference in her reading of Galatians, but a renouncing of the status and privilege attached to the various aspects of embodiment. In raising up the Eucharist as a ritual which invites believers into an attentiveness to embodiment, differences and power, she highlights a moment in the church’s life, where discernment may be practiced. Vondey argues similarly that for pentecostals the Eucharist ‘invites the hungry, the poor, the addicted, and the fearful into a fellowship of love, equality,

⁷³¹ M. Shawn Copeland speaks of race, gender, class, sexuality and culture as marks or markers of identity, in her work *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race and Being* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010). This use is not to be confused with the use of ‘marks’ in relation to scars in Candida Moss’s work, *Divine Bodies*.

⁷³² Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom*, 82.

freedom, and hope'.⁷³³ Yet it is only through the discernment of bodies – not just the discernment of Christ's body or the body of the church⁷³⁴ - that one might notice who 'is not at the table',⁷³⁵ and therefore where the body of people is not yet truly the body of Christ. In a world in which wealth, whiteness and patriarchy convey status and privilege, the Eucharist offers pentecostals a practice which may form in them, resistance to such norms. It is not observing the Eucharist in a ritualistic manner that transforms believers – but the presence of the Spirit of Christ who was crucified and raised back by the Spirit to life, with scars. A more regular adoption of Holy Communion and particularly, teaching on its social and political relevance, may reinforce pentecostalism's earlier impetus for being a movement of welcome for all people. As Delroy Hall has explained in his work on the Eucharist in relation to Pastoral Theology for African Caribbeans, the Eucharist should not only be a moment for remembering Christ's suffering, but one's own:

'Remembering one's suffering is not an opportunity for self-pity, generating blame, hating the oppressor or the one with whom one is in conflict. Rather, it is a moment not to forget where one has come from, based on the life and work of Christ, and the efforts and the lives lost by our African ancestors...Remembering also helps those who are enjoying the spiritual benefits of salvation not to forget others who could benefit from experiencing Christ and his love.'⁷³⁶

The Eucharist may play a very important role in helping pentecostals to attend to the particularities of history and of the present, as well as to be aware of those who are missing, within the framework of worship and remembrance.

7.3.2 Solidarity as Initial Evidence

⁷³³ Wolfgang Vondey, "Pentecostal Ecclesiology and Eucharistic Hospitality: Toward a Systematic and Ecumenical Account of the Church," *Pneuma* 32, no. 1 (2010): 53.

⁷³⁴ Vondey, "Pentecostal Ecclesiology and Eucharistic Hospitality," 45.

⁷³⁵ Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom*, 82.

⁷³⁶ Delroy Hall, "Eucharistic Encounters: Towards an African Caribbean Diasporan Pastoral Theology. Healing Begins where the Wound was Made," *Black Theology*, 14:3, (2016): 230.

The centrality of Spirit-baptism and the initial evidence of Spirit-baptism was a point of great debate for earliest pentecostals and for scholars seeking to define the movement.⁷³⁷ This debate was not motivated by the desire to win a theological argument, but by believers' desperation to know that they were experiencing God's true presence to the fullest and that they were being transformed and empowered as the scriptures taught them was possible.⁷³⁸ The desire to be fully transformed and empowered by the Spirit remains important for contemporary pentecostals but also for Christians across traditions, as a matter of discipleship. Therefore, the matter of 'initial evidence' should not necessarily be made redundant altogether because pentecostals cannot agree on the significance of speaking in tongues.⁷³⁹ Instead, how our exploration of progressive pentecostalism and of the Spirit as one who attends to embodiment might broaden our understanding of initial evidence of Spirit Baptism. Baptism in the same Spirit, 'which raised Christ from the dead' and continues to bring life to believers 'mortal bodies', might be evidenced by attentiveness to oppression and empowerment to acts of solidarity with those who suffer on the margins, unheard and unseen.⁷⁴⁰

As the global centre of pentecostalism (and Christianity as a whole) has moved to the global south, it is even more crucial for pentecostals (and all Christians) in the West to be clear about what it means for them to be witnesses of Christ. While pentecostalism in Britain and America has historically been a movement among the 'least of these' as we have seen, today this is no longer the case. While this brings certain socio-economic advantages it also involves the risk that pentecostals today become out of touch with the interests of

⁷³⁷ Lovett, "Black Origins of the Pentecostal Movement," 129; Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 55-56, Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 15-16; Jacobsen, *Reader in Pentecostal Theology*, 10, 14, 54.

⁷³⁸ Jacobsen, *A Reader in Pentecostal Theology*, 3-4, 10.

⁷³⁹ Kay, *Pentecostals in Britain*, 58-59, 73.

⁷⁴⁰ Romans 8:11.

those forgotten and marginalised by the world. Pentecostals in the West also find themselves in a context in which the meta-narratives offered by white colonial Christianity (which have deeply shaped the pentecostal movement) are increasingly called into question by postcolonial, liberationist, anti-capitalist, womanist/feminist and queer voices as well as those of disability scholars.⁷⁴¹ Movements like #BlackLivesMatter, #metoo and #churchtoo must be received as a prophetic provocation to pentecostals to address the problems of power and embodiment in their midst and in the wider world.⁷⁴² Pentecostal witness to the Gospel for all people - including ethnic minorities and women - depends on the capacity of pentecostals to exhibit 'evidence' of their Spirit-baptism which is relevant to such shifts. Instead of attempting to retreat or recapture a time gone by, contemporary pentecostals must find ways to surpass the failure of some of their progenitors and provide an apologetic for pentecostalism and the church in the West.

Returning once again to the 'tools' of women of global majority heritage, whose theology attends to the matters of power and embodiment (class, gender and race) we will look to Ana Maria Isasi-Díaz, the founding mother of *mujerista* theology, who clarifies for us the meaning of solidarity. First of all, she expresses her concern that solidarity has been equated with a 'disposition' that involves empathy or agreement but 'has little or nothing to do with liberative praxis.'⁷⁴³ Instead, Isai-Diaz argues:

'Solidarity has to do with understanding the interconnections that exist between oppression and privilege, between the rich and the poor, the oppressed and the

⁷⁴¹ David F. Ford, *The Future of Christian Theology* (Somerset: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2011) 8-10.

⁷⁴² Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2016) 193-190; Kelly Colwell and Sheryl Johnson. "#MeToo and #ChurchToo: Putting the Movements in Context." *Review & Expositor* 117, no. 2 (May 2020): 183-98.

⁷⁴³ Ana-María Isasi-Díaz, *Mujerista Theology* (New York: Orbis Books, 1996) 87.

oppressors. It also refers to the cohesiveness that needs to exist among communities of struggle.⁷⁴⁴

There are two dynamics which we must recognise in this definition. The first is the matter of analysing how different powers work, whether class and wealth, race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality. Who are those who gain privilege on the basis of their embodiment, and who experiences disadvantage? The label of 'oppressor' and 'oppressed' can be more nuanced when we consider the intersectionality of these issues. We must also ask in what ways a person may be privileged by one aspect of their embodiment and yet be disadvantaged because of other characteristics. The second aspect of solidarity in Isasi-Díaz's definition relates to the matter of building power among those who struggle. It raises the question of how those experiencing various oppressions in the world may not be considered objects of charity or pity but may discover the capacity to build strength together. In order to interrogate these two matters, I will present several forms of solidarity which are relevant for pentecostals in Britain and the West more broadly who are seeking an 'initial evidence' relevant to the realities of human experience. I begin by highlighting the importance of institutions and organisations run for and by UK ethnic minorities, women's groups and action and advocacy alongside poor white communities and on behalf of the global poor affected by the ecological crisis.

7.3.2.1 Solidarity Among Britain's Ethnic Minority Groups

Solidarity is often described as something which privileged people are asked to demonstrate with those who are disenfranchised and marginalised - we will deal with this aspect of solidarity in the second section. Here, I want to address the matter of 'cohesiveness among communities of struggle.' The story of pentecostalism past and present suggest that while

⁷⁴⁴ Isasi-Díaz, *Mujerista Theology*, 89.

the development of interracial churches may indeed be admirable, churches which belong overwhelmingly to particular minority ethnic groups have a crucial role in developing holistic theological frameworks and strategies which address the fullness of human life and redress racial injustice.

Throughout this thesis, I have critiqued the matter of power as it relates to race. I questioned William Seymour's focus on interracial churches and the overlooking of black community organisations, the problem of white power in early pentecostalism and the racial splits in the movement [2.3.1.1; 3.1.4; 3.2.4]. I have critiqued the ongoing struggle for black pentecostals in white-led churches in Britain and the racial divides that persist where white pentecostals are not often found in churches led by leaders who are not white [4.2.2.3; 6.1.1]. All of this has been discussed in the context of a history of colonisation and racism in Britain [4.2.2] We saw that contemporary pentecostals are able to resist some of these issues, with racially mixed leadership and an openness to black theological perspectives, but that these examples are few and far between. This analysis should make it clear that the flourishing of people of colour is undermined in spaces where white power is not held accountable, and that even where it is, the task of creating and sustaining such interracial churches is often carried on the back of those who are not white. Solidarity as Isasi-Díaz explains, depends on solidarity among those who struggle which in this case means black, Asian and other ethnic minorities in Britain. I would suggest that solidarity must involve the support and protection of black, Latinx and Asian majority churches as places of solidarity, empowerment and racial justice. Protection is required particularly because I would suggest that white majority churches and white-led Christian organisations in Britain seek to improve their diversity in ways which have the effect of a 'brain drain' for black and ethnic minority

churches.⁷⁴⁵ Again the interests and priorities of the UK majority ethnic group are seen to impact negatively upon UK minority ethnic groups, rather than partnership and solidarity in ways which protect black interests. It is in African, Caribbean and Asian-led spaces, where groups who may face misunderstanding or hostility in the wider culture, find communities in which they are supported to name and address the fullness of their experiences as human being as well as believers. For diaspora churches such as these, the particularities of embodiment and the cultural, social and political aspects are fully expressed, celebrated and can be drawn with more direct focus into theological reflection and public action.

This may seem like a strange conclusion in the light of my condemning of what I called the 'anti-pneumatic resistance' of the work of the Spirit at Azusa Street as she drew together people across racial lines. However, what the history of pentecostalism tells us, is that in order for there to be any reconciliation there must first be a restoring of dignity and wholeness to those who are downtrodden, in other words there must first be reparation. For Seymour and some of the pentecostals at Azusa Street, the eagerness to move to reconciliation without attending to reparation, meant that the trauma and the *sin* of white supremacy was not confessed nor resolved. In the end Seymour bans white people from leadership because of the ongoing sabotage of his ministry by some white leaders and is said to have died of a broken heart without seeing his interracial vision realised.⁷⁴⁶ Reconciliation is a matter of negotiation of power, which can only be undertaken by those of equal power. The building of that power for those who have been disempowered, can take place only in spaces of solidarity as Isasí-Díaz describes. Seymour's heart may well have been

⁷⁴⁵ This has partly been encouraged by popular perspectives on diversity and inclusion which have encouraged white churches to address representation in leadership as a core strategy to tackle the feeling of isolation that some black people feel in such spaces. Lindsay, *We Need to Talk About Race*, 97-112.

⁷⁴⁶ Nelson, *For such a time as this*, 43.

strengthened by time with the AME church in his earlier years, or indeed with COGIC, even if he did not stay there permanently. Pentecostals today must learn from William Seymour whose vision and strength were not sustained but may have been bolstered had he benefitted from a wider network of support from black peers as crucial to his strategy for moving pentecostalism toward a more just future and thus to represent a more profound witness.

7.3.2.2 Solidarity Among Women

The same argument could be made for women within pentecostalism who are looking to ensure the flourishing of women alongside men in the church and the world; spaces for women's solidarity is crucial. While women's ministries have been the typical space for pentecostal women to minister to one another, overall, these spaces have not been involved in political organising for women's rights within the church or even in the wider community (even though some subtle forms of subversion have been possible).⁷⁴⁷ Discipleship or care ministries are not designed to disturb the status quo but rather to keep it stable and help women to find their place within it. The opening up of possibilities for women, I would suggest, depends on the cultivation of women's imagination for the church and the world. One of the practicalities of this, may centre around the introduction of specifically feminist and womanist theological perspectives, which begin to dismantle the male-domination of pentecostal theology and doctrine. Spirit-baptised women would be known for being their fullest selves as Stephenson suggests,⁷⁴⁸ carrying within them the prophetic voice which speaks against the sins of patriarchy which oppose the abundant life of women whether in the church or in social, economic and political life.

⁷⁴⁷ Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 251-2; Butler, *Women in the Church of God in Christ*, 11, 15, 36-37.

⁷⁴⁸ Stephenson, *Dismantling the Dualisms*, 134-5.

The politicising of women's ministry will involve recognising the concerns of women as a whole, not simply the religious concerns of pentecostal women. Solidarity would involve engagement with the realities of women's experiences, and the willingness to critique pentecostal spaces from the perspective of such experiences. One recent example which demands response - not only from pentecostal scholars but also from church leaders - would be the #churchtoo movement.⁷⁴⁹ While we have focussed on the dynamics of power and gender throughout this thesis for the sake of inclusion as matter of justice, #churchtoo highlights the ways in which power abuses so often manifest along gender lines. Attending to these matters by believing women's stories, is crucial for pentecostals seeking to witness authentically to the Good News of Jesus who is judge as well as king. It is known that in cases of #churchtoo women are also complicit in not believing the stories of survivors,⁷⁵⁰ for pentecostals, empowered by the Spirit who preserves scars, listening and believing are non-negotiable. Solidarity among women means listening and believing one another, regardless of race, class or sexuality, and acting in ways which allow life to continue even in the midst of the many deaths cause by patriarchal systems and thoughts.

7.3.2.3 Solidarity *With*: Poverty at Home and Abroad

The matter of solidarity *with* those who suffer, not just *among* those who suffer, as Isasi-Díaz asserts,⁷⁵¹ is also crucial for pentecostals in Britain and in the West. Pentecostal solidarity I argue must also involve action alongside both all those who live in the midst of poverty at home as well as the global poor who are being impacted most deeply by the ecological

⁷⁴⁹ Linda M. Ambrose and Kimberly Alexander, " Pentecostal Studies Face the #MeToo Movement," *Pneuma* 41, no.1 (2019): 1-7; John Wigger, "Jessica Hahn and Pentecostal Silence on Sexual Abuse," *Pneuma* 41, 1 (2019): 26-30.

⁷⁵⁰ Ambrose and Alexander, " Pentecostal Studies Face the #MeToo Movement," 3.

⁷⁵¹ Isasi-Díaz, *Mujerista Theology*, 87.

crisis. We have seen that race, gender and poverty intersect and so in talking about poverty, we do so with the awareness that poverty weighs heavily upon many white people and also a disproportionate amount of UK ethnic minorities and women.

We observed that the history of classical British Pentecostalism involved the socio-economically vulnerable in Britain; both mainly white communities and new arrivals from the Caribbean. Yet, we have also seen that for some pentecostal congregations, social mobility has resulted in a relatively new middle-class status [4.2.1.2]. For those churches who have experienced this increase in wealth, the demand for solidarity *with* means asking how wealthier pentecostal churches may support their less affluent counterparts and in addition, how a wealthy pentecostal church might maintain its capacity to engage in prophetic public ministry. The uneven economic development in Britain often spoken of in terms of the 'north-south divide' has led to generations of increasing poverty and unemployment in places like Sunderland.⁷⁵² The need for political organising, as well as social welfare by churches is clear and urgent, though not always clearly seen. For the inhabitants of this historic town which features in the story of British pentecostalism, solidarity is in short supply, but desperately needed. The question remains of how Britain's pentecostals, with a new understanding of initial evidence, might serve such places. A holistic revival which was missed by their predecessors might be reclaimed in the current time through a willingness to not only pray for a spiritual revival, but to work towards a political one.

For the global poor, whose current earthly lives are at great risk – regardless of what can or cannot be said for their eternal lives – global mission might also be expanded for

⁷⁵² Michael Short and Monica Fundingsland Tetlow, "Sunderland," *Cities* 29, no. 4 (2012): 279-282.

pentecostals whose Spirit-baptism is evidenced by solidarity. For classical pentecostals, the command to 'go into all the world' to preach the Gospel has motivated global missions to convert people from every nation. Yet the reality of the climate crisis suggests that so much of 'the world' and the populations which inhabit it, are at great risk. Melting ice caps and the resulting rise in sea levels, rising temperatures, drought and forest fires, as well as increased shifts in ecosystems, threaten human life and any potential mission for pentecostals regardless of whether mission is understood as an individualised and spiritual or social and political activity.⁷⁵³ In the meantime, those most severely impacted are the poorest who are least able to defend themselves and their land from a disaster of global proportions, which will affect generations to come.⁷⁵⁴ For pentecostals in the relatively wealthy West, the matter of solidarity with the global poor in the midst of the ecological crisis involves a recognition of our common human and spiritual family. It means pentecostals attending not only to the bodies around the communion table, but to those absent and in other places, who are no less connected by the Spirit of God and the common human bond. Pentecostals along with all Christians and people in the richest nations of the world are being increasingly called upon to live within tighter limits and with an ecological consciousness, what Peter Althouse calls 'eco-holiness.'⁷⁵⁵ The ecological crisis should awaken pentecostals - who recognise the Spirit as the one who hovered over the waters, baptises and fill believers and brings forth life in the midst of death – to hear the Spirit's call to live in harmony with the earth and in solidarity with our neighbours, distant though they

⁷⁵³ "Effects of Global Warming," *National Geographic*, accessed December 17, 2020, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/global-warming/global-warming-effects/>

⁷⁵⁴ David Eckstein, Vera Künzel, Laura Schäfer and Maik Wings, *Global Climate Risk Index: Who Suffers Most from Extreme Weather Events? Weather-Related Loss Events in 2018 and 1999 to 2018* (Bonn: Germanwatch, 2019) 4.

⁷⁵⁵ Peter Althouse, "Pentecostal Eco-Transformation: Possibilities for a Pentecostal Ecotheology in the Light of Moltmann's Green Theology," in *Blood Cries Out: Pentecostals, Ecology and the Groans of Creation*, ed. A. J. Swoboda (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2014) 129-130.

may be from our vision. Attentiveness to the body of earth and her trauma, must also be recognised as interweaved with our own, and thus a site for the Spirit's justice and liberation.

7.4 Conclusion

In this final chapter we have drawn the various strands of this thesis together by arguing that pentecostals might find the framing of a pentecostal anthropology which resists pneumatic dualisms, in the Paul's pneumatic reading of Jesus' resurrection. I began by exploring the centrality of the incarnation of Jesus for theological anthropology through the work of womanist scholar Eboni Marshall Turman and feminist pentecostal scholar Lisa Stephenson. Through their work, we saw that the incarnation identifies Jesus with those who experience oppression in the world, meaning he speaks very specifically to pentecostals who have historically, and even in the present, face marginalisation. We then moved on to look very specifically at the resurrection as the focus point for our discussion about embodiment and the work of the Spirit. I argued, with the help of Candida Moss and Shelley Rambo, that the Spirit's retention of Jesus' scars post-resurrection speaks to us about the need for attentiveness to our own social and political traumas, those of others and of the world at large. We saw that welcome of testimonies allows for stories to emerge which will shape the perspective of pentecostals, and we recognised holy communion as a moment in which attentiveness to embodiment (and to the absence of particular bodies) might be practiced. I ended in the final section of this chapter by arguing for solidarity as the response for pentecostals in Britain in the West more broadly. Using Ana María Isasi-Díaz as a main interlocutor, I argued that solidarity can be seen in the development of ethnic minority churches and women's groups, but that it must also be developed in action alongside and on

behalf of the poor in Britain and the global poor being most impacted by the ecological crisis.

8 CONCLUSION

8.1 Thesis Summary

This thesis has concluded where it began; with a commitment to speak truthfully about the nature of embodiment and suffering, and with the hope that those who encounter the divine in embodied ways, may seek the full realisation of that encounter in the transforming of oppressive hierarchies into just communities.

I have shown in chapter 2 that pentecostalism has within its own heritage, that it needs for an integrated worldview, an embracing of embodiment in all of its aspects and a commitment to political action on behalf of the oppressed. The contributions of West African spiritual traditions and of Wesley's Holiness movement, both exemplify that for pentecostals to attend to the body and to address the problems of politics is not a foreign proposition, but merely an often-forgotten element of its core identity.

I have also demonstrated in chapter 3, that Azusa Street, though often heralded as the high point of pentecostalism's prophetic potential, only offered a glimpse of what was possible for the church given over the Spirit, before it was undermined by the resistance of those who sought to maintain the status quo. I have argued that Azusa Street was hampered by a limited dualistic imagination in regard to the Spirit's work, which prevented holistic discipleship for believers of all races, failed to address the trauma of black believers post-slavery, and allowed patriarchy to remain unchallenged.

For Britain's pentecostals whom I discussed in chapter 4, I have shown that they have similarly been impacted by the dualism in which revival is associated with personal conversion to religious piety, rather than to a wider vision of a transformed world. I showed Britain to be a nation in need of transformation even today, as it continues to be marred by

its historic commitments to greed and socio-economic disparity, whiteness and patriarchy. I observed that despite the very real needs of pentecostals who have historically been among the working-class, included many migrant groups and women, their spirituality and theology has often not engaged with their lives holistically. However, we recognised a remnant who have been engaged in public action, for the sake of those most in need.

I highlighted this minority group in chapter 5 by naming the nature of progressive pentecostalism in Britain as the orientation within the classical stream, which is most attune to a holistic understanding of the Gospel. We saw that this group maintain their commitments to the theological themes of the wider classical stream in relation to Christ and his salvation, the call to resist sin, the mission of the church, and eschatological concerns. Yet in each case, we saw that progressives broaden their understanding of these matters in ways which allow Jesus to be recognised as teacher in regard to public life, encourage a blurring of the church-world dualism for the sake of constructive engagement with the 'world', generate the work of social transformation through the Spirit and inspire a seeking out of the signs of the kingdom in the present.

We looked in closer detail at this progressive stream in chapter 6 and saw that in some spaces, pentecostals are able to practice a more holistic pastoral ministry which is rooted in a spirituality which is prepared to engage with the whole of human experience. While some continue to struggle to integrate all aspects of embodied life into spirituality (and some consider these matters to be distractions), others recognise the Spirit as one who interrupts the comfort of the those inhabiting the world in privileged bodies, empowers listening and speaking, stirs lament and inspires the commitment to action on behalf of oppressed groups. In the wider community, we recognised that the Spirit who transcends dualisms,

leads pentecostals to do the same as they seek to understand their own calling, discover sources of wisdom and guidance, participate with God in public ministry and serve those of other faiths. We saw that progressive pentecostal women continue to struggle within churches where patriarchal traditions remain in place, problematising their embodiment except in the case of certain wives. Yet in the wider community, we saw that women serve as mothers and sisters, offering their insight, care and leadership to serve 'the least of these'.

In the final chapter 7, I looked to womanist and feminist scholars to construct a pentecostal theology of embodiment which might integrate the oppressions we have named through this thesis, with the work of the Spirit who in Paul's words, raised Christ from the dead. In the retention of Jesus' scars I argued that the Spirit might be understood to be calling us to the attentiveness to the scarring of our own bodies and those of others, dehumanised by the structures and powers operant in our world at the church. In considering how one might practice such attentiveness to embodiment, I looked to the practices of sharing testimony, to the eucharist and to acts of solidarity between and with those who suffer locally and globally due the poverty and the racialising and gendering of bodies.

8.2 Looking to the Present for the Future

One of the many gifts that womanist scholarship offers us, is the challenge to ensure that we attend to the voices not heard, to the ways of knowing which are unknown, and to the matters which we do not often speak of. Delores Williams explains it this way in a section called 'freedom fighters' in her paper 'Womanist Theology: Black Women's Voices':

'The womanist theologian must search for the voices, actions, opinions, experience, and faith of women whose names sometimes slip into the male-centering rendering of black history but whose actual stories remain remote.'⁷⁵⁶

In keeping with the womanist commitment to all of humanity through the black woman's experience, we might equally add the need to search for the voices, actions etc of all those who are unrepresented in history overall. In Britain, there is a distinct lack of womanist, black and Asian religious and theological scholarship which might help to move towards such a destination, despite the fact that Asian and particularly black groups are so significantly represented in the British church. The need for cultivating black, Asian, Latinx religious scholars and theologians in Britain has never been more pressing for the future of the church, the faith and the nation. I have grown into a womanist as I have analysed and read and explored in the writing up of this thesis, yet at the time of fieldwork, I was not yet what I would become. I lament the ways in which I as the researcher have fallen prey to patriarchal imaginations of power, by focussing so often on the recognised male leaders of churches and organisations, rather to the unnamed women whose labour sustains those churches and organisations. This explains my slight hesitancy in claiming the womanist label for this work overall and is something I will be mindful of in future work.

The second reflection I would like to offer is on the theme of intersectionality in theological ethics. I have highlighted the work of Kimberlé Crenshaw at several points in this thesis, in order to argue that is insufficient for theology to try to deal with one aspect of inequality in isolation from the others.⁷⁵⁷ We have had to limit the scope of this thesis to dealing exclusively with the matters of class, gender and race, but I did not choose to focus solely upon the poor black woman as the one in whose body these three aspects of

⁷⁵⁶ Williams, "Womanist Theology: Black Women's Voices" 119.

⁷⁵⁷ Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex," 139-140; Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins," (1989): 1241-299.

inequality find their intersectional point (though some would consider this to be essential).⁷⁵⁸ While this may be the case, I saw the advantage in taking the approach I chose, in which I showed both the distinctive realities of class, race and gender oppression and the intersectionality experienced by groups like women of colour. I was keen for this work to be unified around the common problem of embodiment and disempowerment experienced by poor people and women of all races and people of colour in all classes. I did not deal with the matter of sexuality and disability because of limitations on space. However, the complex intersectional nature of dehumanisation means that scholars and practitioners cannot restrain analysis and action at the level of class, race and gender. In the UK, research offers evidence of discrimination against LGBTQ+ people by healthcare services,⁷⁵⁹ experiences of fear and discrimination in the workplace,⁷⁶⁰ a lack access to adequate housing in old age,⁷⁶¹ and increases in self-destructive behaviours by young people due to the abuse they suffer as sexual minorities.⁷⁶² The church is one of the primary places in which discrimination and abuse take place.⁷⁶³ In the UK, there are 14.1 million people known to have disabilities,⁷⁶⁴ with the vast majority being unemployed due to lack of preparedness of organisations and discrimination.⁷⁶⁵ People with disabilities have higher living costs, meaning that

⁷⁵⁸ Phillips, *The Womanist Reader*, xxxviii-xxxix.

⁷⁵⁹ Daniel Allen, "Unequal treatment: the experience of LGBT people in the UK today," *Nursing Standard* 34, no.2 (2019): 22-24.

⁷⁶⁰ Holly Henderson, "Silence, obligation and fear in the possible selves of UK LGBT-identified teachers," *Gender and Education*, 31:7(2019): 849-865.

⁷⁶¹ Sue Westwood, "LGBT* Ageing in the UK: Spatial Inequalities in Older Age housing/care Provision," *The Journal of Poverty and Social Justice* 24, no. 1 (02, 2016): 63-76.

⁷⁶² Elizabeth McDermott, Katrina Roen and Jonathan Scourfield, "Avoiding Shame: Young LGBT People, Homophobia and Self-Destructive Behaviours," *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 10, no. 8 (2008): 815-29.

⁷⁶³ Harriet. Sherwood, "UK Churches Urged to Wake Up to Spiritual Abuse of LGBT People." Guardian News & Media Limited, accessed February 11, 2021 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/17/uk-churches-urged-to-wake-up-to-spiritual-abuse-of-lgbt-people>.

⁷⁶⁴ "Disability facts and figures," Scope, accessed February 11, 2021, <https://www.scope.org.uk/media/disability-facts-figures/>.

⁷⁶⁵ "Disability Confidence: The Business Leadership Imperative," Scope, accessed February 11, 2021 <https://www.workwithme.support/resources/articles/disability-confidence-the-business-leadership-imperative/>.

employment discrimination leads to even higher increases in poverty among people with disabilities and their families.⁷⁶⁶ It is to these matters that the Spirit may well be calling pentecostals to engage in further thought and action as a core element of the progressivism within the movement in the UK and the world.

⁷⁶⁶ “Disability facts and figures,” Scope, accessed February 11, 2021, <https://www.scope.org.uk/media/disability-facts-figures/>.

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